Library Receives S

By Niels H. Sonne

One of the great pleasures and satisfactions of the librarianship at the General Theological Seminary is the opportunity to acknowledge from time to time distinguished contributions. At the end of 1958 the library received one of the greatest gifts in its entire history — the main body of the extant papers of Bishop Samuel Seabury. This collection was given by Mr. Andrew Oliver, a trustee and well proven friend of the Seminary. The collection is not strange to the close as it was owned by the bishop's grandson, the Rev. Dr. Samuel Seabury, Professor of Biblical Learning from 1862 to 1872, and, in turn, by his son, the Rev. Dr. William Jones Seabury, Professor of Ecclesiastical Polity and Canon Law from 1873 to 1916. At various times, Prof. W. J. Seabury drew pieces from the collection and gave them to the Seminary. These earlier gifts include the bishop's consecration certificate and his concordat with the Church of Scotland. Prof. Seabury also leaned heavily on this collection in his biography of the bishop. The papers have been in the library for three years on loan, and a selection from them was exhibited in a fourteen case show in 1956, which was seen by many friends of the Seminary. They have now been carefully calendared and catalogued and are kept in a fire resistant cabinet especially purchased for the purpose.

The Seabury Collection consists of a variety of materials. There are approximately two hundred and fifty individual documents dated from 1740 to 1796, with the main concentration in the 1780s and 1790s. These documents vary widely in character, from personal papers, letters, accounts, receipts, to originals and copies of the essential documents in several crucial events in Seabury's life. There are also about forty manuscript sermons. In some instances, sermons are written on the blank parts of or directly over letters which are of greater interest than the sermons. There are several bound volumes, including the Minutes of the Proceedings of the Convention of New York from May 1766 to May 1767; Seabury's Journal B, 1791-1795 (Journal A is unlocated) and a sermon by Seabury's father. There are forty printed pamphlets and books and twenty-four issues of newspapers with matter of interest for the career of the bishop.

Many of the Seabury documents are of the greatest interest to Episcopalians. When Seabury was in England for study and ordination in 1753, his father sent him a letter to be delivered to Thomas Sherlock, bishop of London, urging a bishop for the American colonies. This letter, foreshadowing the career of the bearer, is in the collection. A number of documents center around Seabury's peculiar father-in-law. This gentleman, among other things, wished to recover the cost of maintenance of his daughter from the time of her mother's death to her marriage. Seabury, under the pseudonym 'A. W. F.', was engaged on the loyalist side in a pamphlet controversy with Alexander Hamilton. The collection includes five pamphlets in this important pre-Revolutionary controversy, two by Alexander Hamilton and three by Seabury. It also includes papers which conclusively prove that Seabury was 'A Westchester Farmer.' In consequence of this activity, Seabury was arrested by a raiding party under Captain Isaac Sears, and the documents include his Memorial to the legislature of Connecticut requesting release from confinement. There are a number of official documents of interest, including Seabury's appointments to Grace Church in Jamaica and to St. Peter's in West Chester,

Seabury Manuscripts

nne, Ph.D., *Librarian*

by Charles Hardy and Henry Moore, governors of New York, and his appointment as Chaplain to the King's American Regiment, dated February 14, 1778.

When Seabury went to England in 1783, to seek consecration, he did so heavily armed with a letter from the clergy of Connecticut, endorsements, testimonials, introductions, and so forth. Many of the papers deal with the transactions which led to Seabury's consecration in Edinbourgh in 1783. Later documents are concerned with Seabury's career as the first American bishop in a novel political and social situation. They reflect a certain tension between the time honored conception of the office of bishop in England and the insistent demands of American democracy as they manifested themselves in the laity and clergy of the era. Some of the documents, as well as a folio Prayer Book with revisions inscribed in the bishop's hand, reflect the movement towards a new American Prayer Book for use in the newly independent Church. Many of the correspondents are well known figures of Episcopalian history: Thomas Bradbury Chandler, William White, Charles Inglis, William Smith, Jonathan Boucher, among others. Another more humble correspondent was the mother of a daughter in distress, who communicated through letters left under a stone in the bishop's yard. One of the most touching letters is dated North Hempstead, February 28, 1790, and addressed to 'Right Reverend and dear Sir' from the bishop's stepmother, Elizabeth Seabury, who had married the elder Samuel Seabury about sixty years before. All in all, this collection is a vital body of documents of the formative stage of the American Episcopal Church.

The value of manuscript collections for the Seminary's instructional program has been strongly demonstrated during the present academic year. The re-organization, calendaring and cataloguing operation carried through last summer has resulted in greatly increased use of the library's manuscript resources. As the graduate program gains momentum, and more theses are prepared on historical themes, there will be greater dependence upon this type of material. American seminary libraries, by and large, have defaulted on the responsibility for maintaining the manuscript records of religious personalities and religious bodies. Most exhaustive study must be done in the great secular research and university libraries. Many important Episcopalian figures and Episcopalian topics can only be thoroughly investigated in libraries outside the jurisdiction of the Church. The librarian of this seminary is the chairman of two committees, one of the American Theological Library Association, the other of the American Society of Church History, to investigate this topic fully. Mr. Oliver's splendid gift of the Seabury manuscripts is an important addition to the Seminary's resources for the study of the American Church in its early years. All members of the Seminary must be genuinely grateful to Mr. Oliver for this important donation.

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Ten Sermons

by

Samuel Seabury, D. D.

Bishop of Connecticut & Rhode Island.

Being Vol. 1.

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Sermon the first.

Heb. II. 2,3.

For if the word spoken by Angels was stedfast, & every transgression & disobedience received a just recompence of reward; how shall we escape if we neglect so great Salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, & was confirmed unto us by them that heard him?

The author of this epistle begins with asserting the mission of our Saviour Jesus Christ from the Almighty Father, according to the promises he had made by the prophets; & in shewing the superior excellency of the message he delivered when compared with former revelations. He affirms that it was Christ by whom God made the worlds; that he is the brightness of the fathers glory, the express image of his person, & the sustainer of all created nature. From hence he

(2) The excellency of

paſses on to shew the excellency & dignity of Christ above the Angels, from God's calling him his Son, his First-begotten, & from his requiring the Angels to worship him. From this circumstance he deduces the argument in the text, why we ought to give the highest attention to the meſsage the Son of God delivered in his fathers name, carefully to regard the doctrines he published, & obey the commands & institutions he established. For if God required so exact & punctual obedience to the laws & institutions published by Angels, as that every transgreſsion & disobedience received a just recompence of reward, how shall we escape &c: We ought, therefore, to give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard — the doctrines of the Gospel of Christ — lest at any time we should let them slip from our minds by careleſsneſs & negligence.

Heb. 2.1.

the Gospel.

The word spoken by Angels is the Law, or dispensation
Gal. 3.19. of Angels by the hand of Moses its Mediator. The
great Salvation ſpoken by the Lord, is the Gospel, or the
dispensation of Christ its Mediator. The text, therefore,
contains a strong argument why we should submit to
the Gospel. Because, the Gospel being more excellent
than the Law, published by a more excellent person,
founded on better promiſes, confirmed by higher ſanctions,
will ſubject thoſe who neglect it to a heavier
condemnation than they were exposed to, who neglected
the Law of Moses. The apostles reaſoning in another
Heb. 10.28,29. place is therefore just — He that diſpiſed Moseses
law died without mercy — of how much sorer punishment
suppoſe ye ſhall he be thought worthy, who hath
trodden under foot the Son of GOD, & hath counted
the blood of the covenant ~~an unholy~~ wherewith he
was sanctified, an unholy thing, & hath done despite
unto the Spirit of grace? All they are included
in this description, if we will beleive the

apostle, who sin wilfully — live in habits of wilful sin — after they have received the knowledge of of the truth — after the Gospel is preached to them — for them there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but, without repentance, a certain fearful looking for of judgement & fiery indignation.

It therefore becomes a matter of serious consideration to every man to whom the Gospel is fairly proposed, how he rejects it. For it is not a matter in which he is only a spectator, & left to act merely as his fancy & humor may lead him: But he is deeply interested, & his future well-being depends on his conduct. The Gospel is proposed to us as being the will of our creator, the command of our superior; & it claims our attention with the strongest credentials. It began at of the Gospel.

at first to be preached by the Son of GOD, at least by a person who declared himself to be the Son of GOD, & who in that character performed many great & open miracles, who foretold his own death with all its principal circumstances, and put the truth of his declarations on the iſsue of his rising again the third day, which really happened, & is better attested than any other event of the same period of time: And this gospel, & the various miracles by which its divine authority is established, was confirmed by eye & ear witneſses of the preaching & transactions of its divine author: By them who accompanied Him in his life, & who were commiſsioned by him after his death to declare to the world the things they had heard & seen, &

who, in obedience to his command, & in conformity to his example, abandoned every worldly advantage to fulfil the work on which he had sent them. In his name they preached the gospel, & in his name they wrought miracles in confirmation of their own miſsion, & of the truth of what they aſserted; & at last ſealed their testimony with their lives: An event of which their master had apprised them: While the religion they preached, according to the predictions of its author, triumphed over the powers of the world, the malice of its persecutors, the prejudices of both Jews & Gentiles, & in the course of a few years spread over the whole Roman empire, which at that time comprehended nearly all the inhabitted parts of the world. When it is considered that all this was accomplished by a person of low extraction, who lived in poverty, unconnected with, & unsupported by, any worldly power; & by a few illiterate & contemptible men, & the divine power under which they acted, & the divine original of the religion which they propagated, will stand superior to all reaſonable objection: Especially when it is also taken into the account that neither its author, nor its propagators ever attempted to establish any worldly power, or to procure any temporal advantages by its means. They left the civil rights of mankind as they found them, & only aimed at the reformation of the world; to turn men from sin to holineſs, from error to truth, from idolatry to the worship of the Almighty Creator of the universe. The relative & ſocial duties also they particularly regarded, binding their obſervance upon the conſcience, ~~of men~~, by the ſanction of divine rewards & puniſhments; & by placing the ſcene of retribution in a future ~~world~~ life, have effectually prevented all juſt ſuſpicion of aiming at worldly advantage.

Let us then ſee in what this ſalvation through Xt conſiſts, which claims our attention with ~~ſo much~~ authority, & demands our obedience under ~~ſuch~~ great penalties:

Let us see then in what it conſiſts

1. It offers to us remiſſion of Sins through Xt its author, & in conſequence of the atonement he has made.

The Scriptures conclude all under ſin, becauſe all have ſinned: That is; Divine Revelation conſiders all men as offenders againſt the divine law, becauſe, in truth & fact, they all are so.

Gal. 3.22.
Rom. 3.23.

The law given to Adam, the father of the human race, was the law of unſinning obedience. He was to obſerve & do all that God commanded him; & through that obedience was to live & be happy with his Creator. He did not continue in this ſtate; but, by eating the forbidden fruit, transgreſsed Gods poſsitive command. The penalty was death. This penalty he encurred & became mortal. He also lost his innocence, & the anguish of guilt was his portion. He depraved his nature, & fell under the dominion of turbulent paſsions & bodely appetite, which rendered him incapable of fulfiling the divine law: For he could no longer do the things that he would — which his conſcience & reaſon approved; but, in oppoſition to both, lived as paſsion & appetite dictated. His poſterity inherited all the evils of the ſtate into which he had fallen — the evil of ſin, of depravity, of punishment — Not through any arbitrary imputation or decree of God, but by that neceſsity of nature whereby children partake of the diſpoſition, conſtitution, & ſtate of being which belong to their parents. Hence it has come to paſs, that evil paſsions, vicious affections, & uncontrolable bodily appetites, have ſhewn themſelves in all the children of men, from Adam to this day. And, under the full force of malignant paſsions & evil concupiſcence, all must have remained, till temporal death consigned them over to eternal miſery, had not Xt interpoſed his mediation. Through infinite mercy & love he became our Redeemer — Took our nature upon him, & in it, fulfilled all righteousneſs — Died in our ſtead, & as our ſubſtitute — Sacrifised that nature on the altar of the Croſs, & in it, bore the burden of Gods wrath against the ſins of men. And God acknowledged his acceptance of the atonement he made, by raising him ~~up~~ from the dead, receiving him, in his human nature, ~~up~~ into heaven, ſetting him, at his right hand, invested with power & authority to govern the world, as King of the mediatorial kingdom, till the conſummation of all things, & by sending the holy Spirit upon his apoſtles, whom he commiſsioned to preach redemption & remiſsion of ſins in his name & through the propitiation he has made. He has, moreover, promiſed, that through faith in him, i.e. by beleiving & doing what he has commanded, we shall be justified from all things from which we could not be justified by the law — That is, We shall have full & perfect remiſsion of all our ſins, ſo that they ſhall never be brought into account against us. For,

acts 13.39.

2. By the Redemption of Xt we are freed from the law of perfect obedience, & are put under the law

of the Goſpel law of Grace, or of favour: & our ſincere & unremitted endeavours to obey from the heart all his commands, & comply with all his injunctions are accepted by God thro' his atonement. All our ſins alſo, whether of infirmity or ſurprize; & even our wilful tranſgreſsions committed after our belief in him, are forgiven & done away upon our repentance & amendment.

To a perſon who has any ſenſe of the evil ſtate of his nature, & of his inability perfectly to keep the laws of God, who feels the ſting of guilt & the condemnation of his own conſcience, this must be a most welcome conſideration. He will be duly ſenſible of the greatneſs of this ſalvation because he duly feels the want of it; & will ſhew his gratitude for the precious gift by exerting his utmost endeavours to be made partaker of it.

3. The greatneſs of the ſalvation through Xt appears from his having given us his Holy Spirit to excite us to embrace, & enable us to fulfil the conditions of the atonement, & remiſsion of ſins to be obtained through him.

Adam, as was before obſerved, by his tranſgreſsion, depraved, corrupted, & weakened human nature; ſo that it is no longer able to avoid what is evil, nor to perform that which is good; & conſequently no longer able to yield perfect obedience to the laws of God. It has also been obſerved that Xt has in our nature fulfiled this law, & paid its penalty, & thereby freed us from its obligation; And in its room has given us a new law, even the gracious law of his Gospel, by which our ſincere, though imperfect, obedience is accepted inſtead of that unsinning obedience which we were no longer able to perform. He has, moreover, given us his Holy Spirit, to be in us a principle of a new & holy life; exciting & enabling us, by faith & penitence, to embrace his mediation, rely upon his atonement, & to obey the laws of his Gospel, which he has commanded us to do to the end of our lives. So that, if our ~~own~~ fault & perverseneſs do not hinder, we ſhall, by his mercy, obtain the full effect of that redemption he has wrought for us. And this conſtitutes the last particular in which the greatneſs of the ſalvation offered to us through him consists, viz:

4. The reſurrection of our bodies & eternal life, i.e. endleſs happineſs in heaven.

This indeed crowns the whole, & is the end aimed at by all that he has done & ſuffered for us: It is the consequence of the last particular — our having his bleſsed Spirit to govern & direct us in our pilgrimage through this uncertain world. For *if the Spirit of him that raiſed up Jesus from the* Rom. 8.11.

the dead, dwell in you; he that raiſed ~~Xt~~ up Christ from the dead, ſhall alſo quicken your mortal bodies, by — or becauſe of — his Spirit that dwelleth in you. As in Adam all die, ſo in Xt ſhall all be made alive. That is: As death came upon all men through the first or natural Adam, ſo Reſurrection ſhall be to all men through Xt the ſecond or ſpiritual Adam. All ſhall riſe at the last day, that all may be judged, & that all may in the body, receive the things done in the body, according to that they have done whether it be good or bad. The conſequence of the reſurrection, therefore, will be different, according to the different ſtates of thoſe that riſe. For they that have done good ſhall come forth, from the grave, to the reſurrection of life; & they that have done evil, unto the reſurrection of damnation.

Cor.
.22.

Cor.
.10

Jno.
.28,29.

Thus have I, in a ſhort & plain manner, endeavoured to ſet before you the greatneſs of the ſalvation refered to in the text, & the ground on which it claims your attention. It remains for you, my ~~friends~~ readers, to judge for yourſelves, whether any, & how great, condemnation may be due to thoſe who neglect it, either by rejecting it altogether, or dishonoring it by a wicked life? ||

As to the first of theſe, they ſhould remember that it is a matter of great conſequence how they determine: For if the

Gospel be true, their doom will be dreadful; the mouth of the
meek & merciful Jesus having declared that it will be more S. Mat.
tolerable for Sodom & Gomorrha, in the day of Judgment, 10.15.
than for them. And let those who hold the truth in Rom.
unrighteouſneſs — who dishonor Xts holy religion by a wicked 1.18.
life — remember, that God will render indignation and Rom.
wrath, tribulation & anguish, upon every soul of man 2.8,9
that doth evil, in the day when he shall judge the —16.
ſecrets of men by Jesus Xt, according to the Gospel.

But if any one be ſensible of his ſinful ſtate, by w^{ch}
he stands exposed to the justice of God, let him remember that Xt has made atonement for his ſins, & is
his advocate with the Father.

Does any one feel the weakneſs & depravity of his
nature, & his utter inability to yield a perfect obedience to the laws of God? Let him remember, that
Xt has fulfilled & taken away the law of unsinning
obedience; & has ſubstituted the mild law of grace
in its stead — the law of penitence, & faith, & ſincere,
though imperfect, obedience. And that this is now
the law by which we are to live, & by which we shall

finally

of the Gospel.
finally be judged.

Is any one alarmed at his own imperfection, & want of ability to fulfil the merciful terms of the Gospel covenant? Be it his comfort that Xt hath given the holy & almighty Spirit to help his infirmities, to strengthen his faith, to quicken his repentance, to confirm him in every good work, to enable him to deny ungodliness & worldly lusts, & to live soberly, righteously, & godly in this present world, according to the Gospel.

Is any one in dread of death & the grave, & of that future judgment which all must undergo? It is our confidence & joy that Xt is the resurrection & the life; & that whosoever believeth in him, tho' he were dead, yet shall he live; And whosoever liveth & believeth in him shall never die (Jn. XI. 25, 26) But let them remember that it is by patient continuance in well doing — in believing & obeying the Gospel — that they must seek for glory, honour, & immortality: And that to them who do so, God will give eternal life in the day when he shall judge the world by Jesus Xt, according to the Gospel.

Seatatcott }
Islip } 1821

Islip } 1823

Sermon the second.

The ~~unfaithful~~ unjust steward.

Luke XVI. 8.

And the Lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: For the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.

The end of instruction & knowledge is action & practice. We are taught the principles of our religion that, believing its promises & threats, we may fulfil its duties by conforming our lives to its precepts. The holy scriptures not only contain the principles of our religion, & make known to us the promises & threats of God, but they contain also many positive commands respecting moral duty as well as faith — instituted ordinances of religion, as well as internal spiritual worship; that in the belief of its doctrines, in the practice of its duties, & in the observance of its ordinances, we may lead godly, holy, & righteous lives in this world, & in the world to come be made partakers of eternal life; which, being the free gift of God thro Xt, he hath promised to all those who love & obey him

But not only is the path of our duty marked out for us in the word of God, strength also to do our duty is communicated to us in the gifts & graces of the holy & blessed Spirit of God. The liveliest motives also, & the most likely to prevail on us to attend to our eternal welfare, are set before us: that as the knoledge of our duty & strength to perform it are, by the goodness of God, imparted to us, we might not wan inducement to set heartily about it & to continue faithfully in it, to our life's end.

Among other motives of this kind, the preference

the

that is due to eternal life with God our Creator, when compared with the highest enjoyments of this world — especially if compared with the wretchedneſs of thoſe who fail of obtaining eternal life — is none of the smallest. Contentment with the enjoyments of this life, & the conſequent negligence in providing for the life to come, seems to hold the greatest number of people in that careleſs, unthinking state with respect to religion, which is of all others the most unfriendly to the Christian character. I mean not that people are content with their situation in the world, for I see them generally striving to mend it. But they are content with what this world gives provided they can obtain it, & to obtain it they exert every faculty, & sacrifice every other object.

Look at the pursuits of men, & you will own that the acquisition of wealth, that is, money, employs by far the greater number of them. The reason is because money, in the present state of the world, commands nearly all its enjoyments. But money can only serve the purposes of this life. Its eager pursuit – the ardent desire with which it is sought, is a proof that worldly happiness is the grand desire & aim of most men, & shews the preference they give to it, if not in words, yet in practice, before the the riches of the kingdom of heaven.

Moralists & preachers have been accused of needlessly & extravagantly depretiating the wealth of the world, of loading it with the blackest names, & of unjustly attributing the foulest crimes to the love of it. If they have reproached wealth itself, instead of the abuse of it, perhaps the accusation may, in some respects, be true. It is not to be denied that when wealth is honestly acquired, & is enjoyed with that temper which Christianity requires, it is on of the first worldly blessings, & may be made a principal means of obtaining that eternal happiness which the goodness of God holds out to us. But it will not from hence follow that the eager pursuit of worldly wealth is not both unchristian & criminal. It withdraws the heart from dependence on God; and fixes that hope on the world, which ought to be placed on God only. It leads us to look to the world for happiness, & makes us forgetful of the one thing needful.

That there is this propensity in men will appear on only a slight observation. In the prime of life, unless they are besotted by some baneful vice, most men appear anxious to provide for old age — to lay up something to live on when the labour of the head & the hands shall fail. If this be done in moderation & honesty, in due dependence on God & consistently with the spirit of our religion, it is so far from being blameworthy that it is commendable. It is only then to be censured when intemperance in the pursuit tempts us to dishonesty, or makes us forget the interests of eternity: Or when the notion of great wealth bolsters up the heart in its own self-dependence, & takes off its trust & confidence in God.

But why should this desire of providing for futurity spend itself only on worldly wealth? Why should it not be carried a step further, & exerted to lay up treasure in heaven — to amaſs the true riches which will endure forever? Compared with them, there is nothing in this world worth ſeeking, because, laid in the ballance against life eternal, our preſent life is lighter than vanity. To provide for eternity, therefore, is of much more consequence to us than to provide for old age. The want of life & the infirmities of old age will soon end in death, but eternity has no end.

It was to turn the deſire of our nature to provide for futurity to the best account, & induce us to uſe the same solicitude for eternity that we uſe for the subſistence of our present life, that our Saviour spake the parable of the unjust steward, of the application of which the text is part. This steward being unfaithful to his Lord, an account of his office was demanded, accompanied by a declaration that he could be no longer steward. The fear of future want alarmed him. How he should live when his Lord should take the stewardſhip from him, became the ſubject of solicitous deliberation. He said he was unable to work, & he disdained to beg. After some reflection he adopted a plan, dishonest indeed — but he had been used to practiſe dishonesty, & was not now alarmed by it — but which he thought would secure a future maintenance to him. His plan was to make friends of his Lords debtors by abating to them a large part of their debts, that gratitude to him might induce them to support him when divested of his office.

How he succeeded in his expectations we are not told. His Lord, however, commended him because he had done wisely. Not that he justified his conduct; but only praised his prudence which looked forward to his future subsistence, & acknowledged that, according to the wisdom & policy of the world, he had acted discretely. His Lords commendation was not unlike that which is sometimes made of a man remarkable for his art & shrewdneſs, viz: that he is cunning & knows how to take care of himself in making a bargain. This would not be understood to be any great commendation of a mans honesty whatever it may be of his art & addreſ

The remark which our Lord immediately subjoin joins, That the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light, is evidently intended to recommend the prudence of this unjust steward in providing for futurity, to our imitation; & to induce us to make the interests of eternity our great care, & the providing for that state which endeth not, the chief concern of our lives, that when death shall remove us from our stewardship in this world we may be received into those heavenly habitations which God hath prepared for those who obey him, in managing the riches of this world which he commits to them, as his stewards, by making to themselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when they fail, & an account of their stewardship is demanded of them, they may be received into everlasting habitations.

This being the import of the parable, the use we ought to make of it is evident. And

1st. To impreſs it strongly on our minds, that we are in this world the Stewards of God, & hold all we poſseſs in it as his gift — a trust committed to us by him: That he will shortly demand an account of us, how we have discharged our stewardship, & will take our office from us, by calling us out of the world.

Our duty then is to conduct our stewardship by the rules he hath given us, that we may be approved by him when our account is made up. In this respect the laws of God are plain. The distribution of worldly wealth is various. Some abound in riches; others are oppreſsed by poverty. God requires that the superfluous wealth of every one — that is, at least, what the neceſsities, comforts, & decencies of his station do not require — should be distributed to those who are pinched by poverty, & are unable to supply their own neceſsities; especially to the poor members of Christs body — their fellow Christians. And, for our encouragement, he hath promised to reward with his favour in his heavenly kingdom, those who, in this respect obey him.

Besides the distinction of riches & poverty there is another of very great consideration, & nearly allied to it, which in the present state of the world must obtain in it; & that is the distinction of debtor & creditor. Here Christianity lays an obligation on all Christians that they treat with humanity & mildness every one who is indebted to them, especially if they be unable to pay. Let them remember that tho' in the eye of the civil law what they demand is their due, yet properly speaking it is not their own, but belongs to God whose stewards they are, & must be managed according to his will. If their debtor is poor & distressed, a remission of the whole debt, or [illegible] an abatement of part of it, according to the extremity of his condition, & ~~according to~~ his ability to pay, will procure for them the commendation of their Lord, & will make to them friends of the mammon of unrighteousness

(This steward is called unjust. Undoubtedly his conduct was unjust considered in respect of an earthly Lord of whose business he had the management. But with respect to God no rich man can be guilty of injustice in this matter. He is indeed God's steward; but his stewardship is that of an almoner. His wealth was put into his hands for this very end, that he might be able to distribute the blessings of God in works of liberality & mercy. His religion calls him to do so with a willing & cheerful mind, ~~& [illegible]~~ his Saviour spake this parable to instruct & encourage him to be merciful to those who are indebted to him, to release them of their debts, or make such abatements as their necessities shall require.)

One reason why this steward is stiled unjust, probably was, that he had the management of the mammon of unrighteousneſs, that is of injustice: a name of reproach with which Christ seems to have branded all worldly riches. And probably no great estate now subsists in the world, in the acquisition of which no degree of injustice was employed.

This consideration should guard us against setting our affections on worldly wealth, & should induce us to make to ourselves friends of it, that when this life shall fail, we may be received into everlasting habitations. The only way to do this is to make that use of wealth which God hath directed— the use of liberality & mercy.

2ly. This parable ought to convince us of the importance of the direction given to us in it, & of the neceſsity of our immediately complying with it.

Had it been a matter of no account whether we provided for our future state or not, we can not suppose our Saviour would so solemnly, &

so strongly have enforced it on us. To contrive & deliver parables merely to please the ear & delight the imagination can never be imputed to him who came into the world to seek & to save that which wa lost. Some further end, therefore, must have been in his view: And that could only be the end which brought him from the throne of his glory — the salvation of miserable man.

All Christs directions presuppose the necessity of their being obeyed. He could give no useless ones, & unobserved they could answer no end. Now the evident consequence of the direction implied in the text is, That we ought to use as great solicitude, & diligence, & prudence in providing the true riches — those which will endure forever, as the men of this world — the unfaithful, dishonest, unconscionable ones do to provide the riches that perish.

The reason too of our Saviours giving this direction is sufficiently expreſsed in the wording of it— *The children of this world*— they who look only for worldly happineſs, are more wise & prudent in providing for that happineſs which they seek, than *the children of light*,— they who believe the Gospel, & the glories of a future life, are in providing for that happineſs which they know will be eternal.

The children of light have, therefore, need of being admonished & urged to avail themselves of that light, which by the Gospel shines unto them, & by which they profeſs to live, to use the same prudence, diligence, & industry in providing for their future *age* or life, by securing the true riches of the kingdom of God— those good things of eternity which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, which they see worldly men use to provide for worldly happineſs.

And why, I beſeech you, should we not turn that propensity of our nature, which excites us to provide for futurity, into a channel where it will do us infinitely more good than if we confine it to the wealth of this world. If we seek the wealth of this world ever so earnestly, it is uncertain whether we shall obtain it. If we do obtain it, it is uncertain whether we shall live to enjoy it. If we do live, the infirmities of age, & a thousand accidents may prevent our receiving that satisfaction from it which we expect; & at last we must die & leave it: And then, if we have made no provision for eternity, What must be our condition in it? If the rich have not made to themselves friends of the mammon of this world, how shall they be admitted into everlasting habitations? If the creditor hath been hard-hearted & unmerciful to his debtor, what door will be open for his reception? Remember, eternity is a state which hath no end— its happiness or misery have no period.

3ly. This parable ought, not only to convince us of the necessity of providing for a future life, but it ought to excite us immediately to attend to it; because as we are not Lords of our own lives, so neither are we Lords of the good things of this world, to get & use them at our pleasure. We are the creatures of God, & our lives are at his disposal. We are also the stewards of God, He commits to our trust whatever we possess; & he expects a Christian use, & a faithful administration of it. His will is that with it we do good — that we be glad to distribute, willing to communicate, to those who are in want; that by so doing we may lay up in store for ourselves a good foundation against the time to come, that we may lay hold on eternal life.

Far be it then from us, to spend what God hath committed to our trust on our lusts & vanities, in following the corrupt dictates of a selfish heart. Whatever we possess in this world, we possess on a precarious tenour — being stewards for another, not

propri

proprietors in our own right. He who gave hath a right to resume his gifts: And if we are unfaithful, he not only may, but probably will take what was committed to us & give it to another. Or he may take us away to account for our stewardship, before we are prepared for the account, & have made ~~any~~ provision for our eternal state

Be persuaded then to attend to that part of your existence which is of the most importance to you, & to use the same ardour & prudence in laying up treasure for your future life, which worldly men use to acquire the wealth of this world. If you feel the force of nature & reason exciting you to make a decent provision for old age, that you may have something to support & comfort you under its infirmities, Why should you not attend to the same voice of reason & nature, to the calls of religion & of your God, to make provision for that state which must begin, when death shall close the scenes of this life?

Be persuaded to attend to these things— They are the admonitions of your best friend— of him who died to redeem you, who hath given his holy Spirit to conduct you through this life to a better, & who ever liveth in heaven to make intercession for you.

Grant, O God, that following the motions of thy holy Spirit in all things, & trusting in the redemption of thy dear Son for the remission of our sins, we may, through his intercession obtain that eternal life which he hath promised to all who love & obey thee.

36 Setafikat 1817

Pslip ——

Ditto —— 1823

Sermon the third.

The mammon of unrighteouſneſs.

Luke XVI. 9.

Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteouſneſs; that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.

The text is the application which our Lord makes of the parable of the unjust steward, & is the consequence of the obſervation he had made in the foregoing verſe, that the children of this world are, in their generation, wiſer than the children of light.

The steward, who is the subject of the parable, finding that he was to be dismiſsed from his employment, on an accusation of dishonesty, & being ſolicitous for his future support, called to him his Lords debtors, & made a great abatement in their bills; hoping

ing thereby to obtain their good-will, & support for himself when he should be put out of his office. His prudence in providing for his future life is commended as worthy of the imitation of all Christians.

The first thing observable in the text is the name which our Saviour gives to the riches of the world. He calls them the mammon of unrighteousness— literally, the riches of injustice. How differently must he have thought of that wealth for which the world is in a perpetual ferment! for which most people form their alliances & friendships; for which they undermine & devour each other; for which they brave all dangers both of soul & body.

The reproachful manner in which Christ hath spoken of riches, should make us look on them with a jealous eye. He never spake without reason: And because he saw the depth of misery to which their unrestrained enjoyment would lead us, he represents them in a light so contrary to the sense of the world. To that depth our understandings cannot penetrate: The full reason, therefore, of this remark we cannot comprehend. Yet reflection will furnish us with reasons sufficient to justify the severe censure he hath passed on worldly wealth.

One reason probably is that riches are often gotten by injustice; one great estate being ~~often~~ sometimes raised by the oppression of a whole neighbourhood; if not by direct oppression, yet by fraud & over-reaching in business, or by unfaithfulness in trusts committed to men. So that probably there is not a large estate in the world, but ~~that~~ some imputation of this kind may be brought against the present possessor or those ~~predecessors~~ who have held it before him.

Another reason may be that riches are too often used to the purposes of injustice & oppression. We generally see that rich men ~~commonly~~ carry their points, against the sense & interest of those around them, either by the influence of their money, or the dread of their resentment.

But it may be supposed that many estates are acquired honourably, or come by inheritance, without any reproach to the owner; & that they are enjoyed with temperance & humility, & used to the purposes of liberality & mercy. Why, it may be asked, should these riches be called the *riches of injustice*?

In the same sense with the former, I confeſs, they cannot. And I hope this is not a picture of the imagination, but that such estates & persons do exist in the world. There are however some circumstances attending riches, which, if they do not shew them to deserve the name of the mammon of unrighteousneſs, point them out as exceedingly dangerous to our innocence & virtue.

1. Riches have a natural tendency to weaken the principles of justice & humanity. If a man be eager in his desire & pursuit of riches, he cannot

be so easily restrained by the rules of justice, or so effectually influenced by the calls of humanity— Poverty will sometimes in vain solicit relief from him, & wretchedness supplicate his aid without effect. The attendant too of riches is power; & too often the consequence of power is arrogance, which is no friend either to justice or humanity.

2. Riches are apt to withdraw the heart from God, & beget a dependence in it on themselves. It is natural to look to that for protection which supplies our wants & secures us from injury. Instead of depending on God, the rich man is apt to look to his wealth for security against want & the othe evils of life. But to place confidence in riches, as tho they could place us beyond the stroke of adversity, is a degree of idolatry; For idolatry consists not merely in bodily worship.

By nature man is dependent, & must look to something without himself both for subsistence & happiness. On whatever he places his dependence, it becomes to him as a God; if not the object of his worship, yet of his trust & confidence. In this view, was there nothing more to be said against them, are riches highly dangerous to us.

I am, however, apt to think, that our Lord had a particular respect to ill-gotten wealth — literally the riches of injustice — in the parable of the unjust steward. And that his design was to teach us how to make even the fruits of former oppression & villany conducive to our future & eternal happiness. It seems to me that the construction & application of the parable, & the reproachful name of unjust & unrighteous, which he gives to this steward, & to riches, all lead us to this interpretation. I know not how better to make myself understood than by an example.

Avaro set out young in the world in the way of trafic.

traffic. His means were but small: He was, therefore, obliged to begin in the small way. A strong desire to accumulate a large estate excited in him the utmost attention to industry, exactness, & frugality, & at the same time made him regardless of all principle. His whole conduct was regulated by his own reputation & the law. If he lost his reputation he feared none would deal with but sharpers as cunning & dishonest as himself. If the law took hold of him, it might cost him more money than he was willing to part with.

By the most iniquitous arts, — getting a farthing more than was his just due from some, a penny from others, a shilling from these, & a crown from those — By letting out small sums of money at an exorbitant interest, to necessitous persons, but on good security — By mortgages & pledges, on which he always entered at an hours failure — And by many other ways of double dealing & knavery, in about forty years, he amassed one hundred thousand pounds. At this time a grievous fit of sickneſs brought him to the brink of the grave, & to a full sense of his wicked life. Of a covetous worldling & a rapacious usurer, he became an humble, contrite, & penitent Christian — full of faith in God & Christ, & of good works towards men — as ardently solicitous to lay up treasure in heaven, as before he had been to hoard up the wealth of the world.

The heaviest burden of his heart was his hundred thousand pounds, the greater part of which had been gotten by iniquity: His first wish was to restore it to its true owners. But that was impoſsible: The most of them he knew not. In this situation, on reading the parable of the unjust steward, he instantly determined on his own conduct. Where it was in his power, he made such reparation to those he had injured as justice & liberality required. His ears were now open to the cries of the diſtreſsed, & his hands ready to relieve them. The poor debtor, the oppressed, the imprisoned, the widow, the orphan, the hungry & the naked, the Church & ministers of God became the chief objects of his concern, & his money of no further use to him, than as he could do good to others with it. In this way, in ten years, he lessened his estate one half. It then pleased God to call him out of the world, & at his death he bequeathed his remaining fifty thousand pounds to pious & religious uses.

I conceive that Avaro, as far as human frailty would permit, fully complied with the command of the text, & made to himself friends of the mammon of unrighteousness.

I know that the bequest of an ill-gotten estate to works of piety & mercy hath been frequently ridiculed, as a wicked attempt to make peace with God by devoting to him the wages of iniquity. What then shall ~~[illegible]~~ a penitent do with such an estate? To say that such persons are not penitents, but leave their estates in this manner through vain glory & oſtentation, is to say more than we know, & partakes too much of the vanity & cenſoriousneſs of a wicked world, to deſerve any serious conſideration.

Leaving the story of Avaro for your own application, I proceed in the conſideration of the text.

As bad an opinion as our Saviour had of the mammon of unrighteousneſs, he hath commanded us to make friends of it, & aſsures us, if we do so, we shall when we fail, be received into everlasting habitations. He speaks, you ſee, of our failing as of a matter of certainty — an event which must happen; & our own experience declares the same truth. Neither obſervation nor experience give one instance of the stability of human life. Sooner or later, the grave is the common lot of all men.

Though

of unrighteousneſs.

Though all know this with the utmoſt certainty, moſt men live as if this life was the most stable & durable thing in nature — as though it was impossible it should fail. For, did they keep the end of life in view — did that eternity to which they are all hasting lie ſensibly before them, they could not be so unconcerned about providing for it.

The difference between knowing & realizing things is great. The sluggard knows that winter will come, when his broken garments, & open walls, & uncovered roof will expose him to the wind, & rain, & snow. Yet he does not realize the matter, nor conſider the ſtate he must be in, when he ſhall have dosed & idled away the ſeaſon of providing against the ſure coming winter.

So is it with the man of the world. He knows that this life must fail; that the body must go to the grave, & the soul to the place appointed by God for it. But he does not realize this knowledge, nor bring home to himself that state which surely must come; till death, like the sudden winter storm, destroy the blossoms of his prosperity, & lays all his prospects of happiness with his body in the grave. Without any preparation he enters the unknown world; & before he hath sent any treasure thither, becomes an inhabitant of a country from which he must never return till God shall call the dead to judgment.

Since then this life must fail, & an endless life must follow, Why should we not act according to our situation? Why should we not provide for that life by laying up treasure in heaven, & making to ourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness?

That the wealth of this world may be made conducive to heavenly happiness appears not only from the text, but from what our Lord said of unrighteousness.

said on another occasion to his disciples: Sell that ye have, & give alms: Provide yourselves bags that wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, nor moth corrupteth. (Luke XII. 33) In perfect conformity to his divine Master, St. Paul addresseth himself to Timothy, whom he had appointed the Bishop of Ephesus. Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-mind, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good; that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life. (1 Tim. VI. 17—19)

Behold ye that are rich; ye that abound in the good things of this world! Behold, how graciously God hath dealt with you— bountifully providing for you in this life, & making that very bounty the means by which you may secure the happiness of heaven to yourselves.

Others he hath left to struggle with affliction, & bear the load of poverty, & wade through trouble to peace & rest in heaven. Your path he hath spread with flowers, & made it easy & delightful to your feet. Remember, then, that you are Gods stewards— that your riches are his stores deposited with you for the relief of his family— that it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful— that of your stewardship you must give an account in the day when God shall judge the world. [If you wish to give a good account, acceptable to your judge; of the abundance you possess dispense to the poor, & continue in the heavenly disposition of releiving, according to your ability, the helpless & the wretched;

ed; always remembering that *it is more bleſsed to give, than to receive.*

God hath committed to you the talent of worldly wealth, & thereby given you an opportunity (if I may use the expreſsion) of trading for eternity. If, with a miserly temper, you hoard it up, you defeat his purpoſe, & you will fall under the sentence of the wicked servant who hid his Lords money in the earth. If you consume it in vitious pleasures, or make it the means of oppreſsing thoſe in your power, instead of releiving the indegent, the punishment of the unbelieving servant, who because his Lord delayed his coming, fancied he would never come; & began to beat his fellow ſervants, & to eat & drink & be drunken, will be yours (Luke XII. 45, 46)

The great tryal for heaven lies in the renouncing of the spirit & tempers of this world. This is the croſs which we are required to take up

& bear after Christ. On it the *old man*, *the body of sin* is to be *crucified* & *destroyed* (Rom. VI. 6) His destruction lies in the denial of his lusts & appetites. Give him his fill of any selfish gratification however low,— feed him, if it be only with husks, & he will live & grow strong in you.

But if you deny & renounce his selfish tempers, & on the contrary imbibe the true spirit of Christian charity, which is the love of God, & of man for Gods sake— If you seek your happiness in God only, & prize your riches, not because they give you power & influence, gratify your appetites & vanities, & appear to secure you from want, but because they give you the power of doing good, &, in imitation of your Father in heaven, of dispensing benefits to all around you,— this *old man will die, with all his corrupt deeds,* & the *new man, which after God is created in righteousness*

neſs & true holineſs, will grow up in you to the stature of a perfect man in Christ Jesus (Eph. IV. 13.24) your faith in Gods promise, that you shall thereby lay hold on eternal life, that the unrighteous mammon thus employed will become your good friend, & open your way into everlasting habitations, will be your neverfailing support & ſource of delight. ~~to you~~.

And why should you not renounce in your lives, those pomps & vanities of the world, which you have renounced at your baptisms? They are all unsatisfying in the enjoyment, & of short duration; they will leave you comfortleſs in trouble, in ſickneſs, in old age, & hopeleſs in death.

Why will you not deny & keep under that pride & arrogance which wealth tends to inſpire?

spire? why not crush that selfishneſs & covetous spirit which generally attends ~~them~~ it? They render you useleſs & contemptable in life; they withdraw your dependence from God; they deprive you of his grace & bleſsing in this life, & they will aſsuredly shut you out of his heavenly kingdom.

The example the Holy Jesus hath set you, ought to fill your hearts with very different ſentiments. So far was he from coveting the honour, or riches, or power, or pomps of the world, that when he was born in it, he choſe a stable for his birthplace, though he could have commanded the magnificence of a princes palace — to be the reputed ſon of a poor tradesman, rather than the heir of a great monarch. In the early part of his life he ſubsisted by the labour of his own hands, & during his public ministry he was the child of poverty, as well as of labour & sorrow. Having no where to lay his head, his only support was the pious bounty of good people.

Why, I beſeech you, did he ſubmit to ſuch ſcenes of humility & poverty? — It was to teach us, that the grandeur & riches of the world are of no estimation with God — to ſhew us by his own example, in what that poverty of spirit consists, to which he hath promised the kingdom of heaven

The stations into which we are born do not depend on our choice. Our imitation of Christ must, therefore, be shewn in the temper & disposition with which we enjoy the good things of this life, & in the use we make of them. He renounced the world, by renouncing all its tempers, desires, views, & pleasures. We renounce it when we withdraw our hearts from the love of it, & abide in the constant exercise of that charity which *ſeeketh not her own*. He, *for the*

the joy that was set before him, bore all the evils of life, *endured the croſs, despising the shame, & is ſet down at the right hand of the throne of God*. We are to bear the evils of life with patience & resignation to the will of God; to enjoy its bleſsings, & use its wealth so as not to abuse either, but according to the end for which God gave them, the support of our nature, the relief & comfort of the miserable & oppreſsed. Then, when this life faileth shall we be received into thoſe everlasting habitations whither our Saviour Christ is gone before. Amen.

4 Lent. 1794. — 8 Δ 1795.

Sermon the fourth.

The ſons of God.

Rom. VIII. 14.

As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the ſons of God.

The Apostle, in this chapter, points out the different influences & conſequences of two opposite principles of action in men — *the carnal & the spiritual mind* — in other words, the minding of the things of the flesh, & the minding of the things of the spirit. By the former is meant, the ſeeking, or attending to the things of the body, as the only or principal end of life; & the consequent indulgence of the vitious & malignant paſsions of the mind, which, in a good measure, owe their strength to the unrestrained appetites of the body. What is meant by minding the things of the spirit, will, I hope, appear in the following discourse.

The different tendencies of these oppoſite principles are several times mentioned in the chapter, & always in similar terms. To be *carnally minded*, saith the Apostle, *is death; but to be spiritually minded is life & peace* (V 6) *If ye live after the flesh ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live* (V 13)

By *death*, in this place, cannot be intended the death of the body. That is the common lot of humanity. They who mind the things of the flesh, & they who mind the things of the Spirit, are equally subject to it. Death, therefore, in this & similar places of ſcripture, must mean that state of misery, to which incorrigible sinners shall, by the just judgment of God, be doomed in the world to come.

To this death all men are, by their present nature liable, becauſe all have sinned against God, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, & who hath declared that he will execute vengeance upon *every soul of man that doeth evil, in the day when he shall judge the ſecrets of men by Jeſus Christ* (Rom. II. 8, 9, 16)

When I say that all men are by their present nature liable to future misery, I intend not to inſinuate than men shall be punished in the next world because they were born of a depraved nature in this world. Our birth depends not on our choice, & therefore cannot justly ſubject us to punishment. Nor would I intimate that men shall, in a future world, be punished for any guilt beſides their own. I have no notion of guilt by imputation. The judge of the world will do right. As every man *shall give an account of himſelf to God*, so shall he be punished or rewarded according to his own deeds, & not according to the deeds of another.

But it appears that human nature has tempers & paſsions in it which could not proceed from a holy & good God: Nor do they arise from education, or depend on habit, though they may owe much of their strength to them. They are plainly natural to us: We are born with them: Every man has them in a greater or leſs degree; & they incontestably prove that the present nature of man is a degenerate nature. We need no other proof of their evil tendency than the uneasineſs which follows their indulgence; & we must be weak indeed to ſuppose that the tempers which make us uneasy in this life, can make us happy in the next.

If these tempers did not proceed from God, but owe their origine to the fall of human nature from the state of its first creation, the reason is plain why Christianity, which is the divine plan of the redemption & recovery of human nature from its apostacy, requires us to control & correct them. They are naturally productive of evil, to ourselves & to others. They are contrary to the nature of God, & destructive of happiness with him. Of necessity, therefore, they must be corrected by proper discipline, that their baneful influence may be prevented, or we must remain miserable.

There are also appetites of the body, which if unrestrained, are as certain sources of misery to us as any of the passions of the mind; and God hath declared that the unlimited indulgence of them will bring his wrath upon us.

Man, then, is born of an evil nature, full of tempers, & passions, & appetites, which, if unrestrained

restrained, will make him miserable, both in this world & the next. Nature hath given him no sufficient powers to correct these paſsions & tempers, or to ward off their fatal consequences. Reason, it may be said, might do something; And I readily own it does do something, when aſsiſted by education & experience; but left to itself, it only contrives ways & means to gratify the paſs the more agreably.

But take all advantages together, reaſon, experience, education, human laws — They have never yet been found effectually to answer the end propoſed by them. Few, even among thoſe who have the best advantages, govern themſelves by reason, but follow rather the impulse of appetite or interest. Education is often perverted, & made subservient to those tempers & paſsions it ought to correct. Experience comes to late to prevent, it would be happy was its influence always in time to reform, a wicked life. And human laws can only restrain the outward act— they reach not the heart.

To argue against the utility of reaſon from the neglect or abuse of it is, I confeſs unfair. Allow it then all that its warmest advocates have ever attributed to it. None of them have aſserted it to be infallible. Infirmity belongs to man, & where there is infirmity there may be error. If we err, what is to restore us? Suppoſe reaſon recover us to a ſenſe of our duty— evil hath been committed by us— the law of God hath been violated— & our conſcience reproacheth us. What can deliver us from this miſerable state? Can reaſon remove the evil that hath been done? Can it repair the violation of Gods law? Can it restore peace to the troubled mind? Here reaſon is at a dead stand; And what adds to our misfortune is, it hath left us expoſed to the juſtice of God, & under the reproach & condemnation of conſcience.

We must, therefore, ſeek another guide. The redemption of the world by Jesus Christ, is the only ſystem that promises relief to us. Let us then ſee whether that ſystem can make its promiſes good.

Whatever may have been the original condition of man, in his present state, his appetites & passions are the ſprings of his actions — the foundation of his happineſs, as well as the ſource of his miſery. To extinguish them would, therefore, be a uſeleſs & extravagant attempt. To direct them, so as to avoid the misery & secure the happineſs that may spring from them, will be our reaſonable conduct. Christianity informs us, that this is not only practicable, but what God requires us to do. How to do it, he hath given us laws to direct us. That we may be able to do it, he hath given us his own moſt holy & powerful Spirit. To secure engage our obedience, he hath annexed rewards to the obſervance of his laws, & threatened to punish thoſe who disregard them.

As far as we are capable of judging, the happineſs ariſing from the due government of ourſelves is coincident with the rewards which God hath annexed to the obſervance of his laws; and that the unhappineſs which follows the unlimitted indulgence of appetite & paſsion, makes that punishment with which the tranſgreſsors of Gods laws are threatened. In this instance, then, nature & revelation both speak the ſame thing — They both declare wretchedneſs to the wicked, & bleſsedneſs to the good.

That God will punish incorrigible ſinners in another life, he hath declared; And it appears, that thoſe actions, & that mode of life which naturally produce misery, are the very same which God hath threatened to punish. It appears also that he hath promiſed rewards to that conduct which naturally produceth happineſs. *Righteouſneſs tendeth to life* — its natural fruit is happineſs; while *he that purſueth evil, purſueth it to his own death:* This is the law of our nature, & this is the ordinance of our God.

It has been obſerved that nature hath furniſhed us with but little aſsiſtance to regulate & govern our paſsions & appetites; with but little ability to fulfil the law of God; that reaſon & experience are to weak a restraint, & that their influence comes to late. We ſee that people under the influence of paſsion or appetite reaſon not, unleſs it be about the means of gratifying them.

We ſee also that the moſt exact reaſoners often fall the victims of their power.

Notwithstanding, therefore, God hath provided an atonement for the ſons of men, & hath given them aſſurance of pardon of their past offences, upon their repentance, & faith in the Mediator, yet if left to the mere efforts of their own reaſon & natural ſtrength, their warmest hopes would be diſappointed. Paſsion & appetite would forever render their repentance impracticable, & deprive them of the benefit provided for the penitent.

To perfect the plan of redemption which the love of God hath provided for his fallen creatures, & make it effectual to their ſalvation, he hath given them his holy Spirit, to be in them a principle of a new, holy, & heavenly life; a monitor to point out to them the difference between right & wrong, good & evil, & to excite them to purſue the one

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avoid the other; a principle of power, to enable them to reſiſt the impulse of paſsion & appetite, to repent of their past sins, & faithfully to obey God for the time to come, that finally they may be made partakers of that eternal life which God hath promised through his Son.

Though the Holy Spirit be in every man, seeing no man is without an inward perception of good & evil; & may, therefore, in ſome ſenſe, be ſaid to be natural to man; yet we have ſufficient authority, both from divine revelation & the reason of the thing, to affirm that He is the gift of God to man — not to this or that particular man excluſively, but to human nature. Every good gift, & every perfect gift, is from above, & cometh down from the Father of lights (Jam. I. 17) There is none good but one, that is, God (Matt. XIX. 17). God is, therefore, the author & ~~fountain~~ giver, the ſource & fountain of every thing that is good. Whatever, therefore, there is of goodneſs, of virtue, of happineſs, of bleſsedneſs, in men, in angels, in any creature, in all nature, it is only so much of the goodneſs of God manifesting itself in them.

The words of God are the words of power. When he created this world, *He spake ~~the word~~ & it was done; He commanded, & it stood fast* (Pſ. XXXIII. 9) — *Let there be light, said God, & there was light* (Gen. I. 3) Light instantly burst from the bosom of darkneſs. To this day the word of God operates, & the light continueth to shine, obedient to his command. When the unhappy parent of the human race had fallen from the state of his creation, & had entailed ruin & misery on his offspring, the love of God decreed his redemption — *The ſeed of the woman, said God, shall bruiſe the head of the ſerpent* (Gen. III. 15) & with the word, the Holy Spirit of God took poſseſsion of human nature to accompliſh the gracious purpoſe.

To this Spirit we owe that moral ſense; that quick perception of good & evil; that approbation of virtue, & detestation of vice, which are so prevalent in the good, & of which the bad cannot intirely divest themselves. To his influence the world is indebted for all the virtue & goodneſs that ever appeared in it, either under what is called natural religion, or the explicit declarations of revelation.

For the accomplishment of this work of redemption, in the fulneſs of time, that is when all things were prepared according as God saw best, He ſent his Son into the world to make atonement for ſin, to instruct mankind in the will of God, & give them a more perfect system of laws for the regulation of their conduct; to bind the heart & conſcience to the obſervance of thoſe laws, by ~~the~~ revealing clearly & fully a future state of retribution;

tribution; to point out & describe that faith, repentance, & obedience which God requires, & hath promised to accept through the Mediator, & to ſet them a perfect example & pattern of virtue & holineſs in his own heavenly life.

Under this perfect dispensation of the will of God, the efficacy of the Holy Ghost became manifestly viſible in the lives of those who embraced the religion of Jesus. Virtue & holineſs pointed them out to the world, & they made as many converts to their religion by the innocency of their lives as by the truth of their doctrines.

This state of Christianity indeed continued not long. The Roman empire became Christian. Christians were called to manage the intrigues of ambition. A worldly spirit was thereby introduced into the Church. The lusts & paſsions of Christians were inflamed. Virtue gave way to interest, & religion fell a ſacrifice to worldly views.

To account for this degeneracy of Christians, let it be remembred, that the influences of the Spirit are inward on the hearts & minds, not outward on the actions of men — that they operate by way of excitement, not by way of constraint.

Probably the opinion that the operations of the Spirit are irresistable, hath made men more inattentive to the real influences of the Spirit, than any other thing. A man under this belief will never ſuppoſe any motions excited in his mind to be from the Spirit of God, be they ever so good, provided he can resist & stiffle them. He will also be apt to ſuppoſe the the impressions on his mind which are violently strong must be from the operation of the Spirit, because he fancies he cannot resist them. On the one hand, he neglects the calm inspirations, & internal admonitions of the Spirit of God, exciting him to that which is good, & diſsuading him from that which is evil, because he conceives them to be the mere workings of nature; And he conceives them to be the mere workings of nature, because he finds he can resist them, & turn away from them, & refuse to comply with them. Never conſidering that while he neglects the inward ſenſibilities of goodneſs — the holy desires, virtuous purpoſes, & good wiſhes that riſe & form themſelves within him, he, in fact, neglects the influences of the Spirit of God. On the other hand, continually expecting the irreſiſtible operations of the Spirit, he is apt to mistake the sallies of imagination, & the impulse of paſsion for the motions of the Spirit, merely becauſe they are violent & impetuous.

This doctrine, therefore, leads directly to enthuſiasm. And in truth, I have found most of the people of this perſuaſion with whom I have conversed, to be enthuſiaſts in a greater or leſs degree. They build much on ſtrange feelings, unaccountable impreſsions, uncontrollable impulses; They look for the inspirations of the Spirit of holineſs, in the hurricane of the paſsions, in the agitation of strong desires, in the raging fire of intemperate zeal, & deſpise all thoſe who attend to the calm, still voice of God speaking to the soul by his Spirit, & exciting in it holy desires & devout wishes, as carnal, unconverted, & graceleſs persons. Nor does the mischief stop here —

Many people who have not fallen into this error, ſeem to have their judgments perverted by its contagion. They do not indeed ſuppose the influences of the Spirit to be irreſiſtible, yet they think them to be extraordinary, unaccountable ſenſations, very different from every thing of which they have had any knowledge or experience. Hence ariſe thoſe inquiries that are frequently made by well diſpoſed people, How they ſhall know when they have the Spirit? How they ſhall diſtinguiſh his operations from the working of their own mind? Whereas, did they conſider that the Spirit of God is not a diſtant Being exerting his power from without; but that he is within them, in the heart & in the ſoul; & that his influences ſhew themſelves in in the good diſpoſitions, holy purpoſes, & benevolent wiſhes that are there formed, & they would ſoon perceive that there is no room for ſuch inquiries.

In confirmation of this point, let it be conſidered, that the fruits or effects aſcribed to the Spirit are moral qualities, or what we call virtues, benevolence, peaceableneſs, meekneſs, faithfulneſs, temperance. Theſe qualities muſt be ſeated in the heart, & thence draw their origine, or they are not virtues at all. The external action, if it proceed not from the good diſpoſition of the heart, hath the appearance of virtue only, not the reality. A man, for instance, gives largely of his ſubſtance in relief to the neceſsitous; but if vanity be the motive, there is no virtue or goodneſs in it. The Spirit, therefore, which produceth virtuous effects must have the ſeat of his operations in the heart, from whence only virtuous diſpoſitions & actions can flow.

If, therefore, you would perceive & diſtinguish the influences of the Spirit, you must attend to your own hearts, & examine what deſires & purpoſes are formed there. If you wish to cherish & increase the power of Gods Spirit in you, you must comply with all the motions of virtue & goodneſs that stir within you, & strive to bring every holy desire to good effect. Then are you led by the Spirit of God— Then are you the ſons of God— the objects of his love, the heirs of his promises.

The deſign of that holy religion, to the profeſsion of which the good providence of God hath called us, is to make mankind better — to correct the evil propensities of their nature, & bring every thing that is good in them to maturity, that they may become capable of happineſs with their Creator. This can be done only by having the heavenly tempers & diſpoſitions of God brought forth & growing in you; & nothing can effect this but the operation of the Spirit of God. Therefore are they who are led & governed by the motions & inspirations of the Spirit of God, said to be his ſons — ſons, not merely by ~~merely by~~ the appointment & adoption of God; but by having the same tempers & dispositions, which are in God, operating in them, by the power of the Holy Ghost — the bleſsed Spirit of God, according to their ſeveral natures & capacities. When this is done they are capable of happineſs with God, *having escaped*, or avoided *the corruption that is the world through lust*, & being *partakers of the divine nature*, through the operation of the Holy Spirit; and are properly & truly the *Sons of God* (2 Pet. I. 4)

You all know how much the ſtrength of your deſires, & paſsions, & appetites depend on indulgence. Thoſe that are continually checked & controlled become weaker. Thoſe that are gratified grow ſtronger. Your duty, therefore, requires that you watch over the evil propensities of your nature, & that you curb & restrain them; that you attend to every thing that is good in you, &

strive to improve & increaſe it. So ſhall the evil that is in you decline daily, & that which is good gather ſtrength & grow continually, till you ſhall delight in all the ways of holineſs, & become fit inheritors of the kingdom of heaven.

Remember, I beſeech you, that every purpoſe, every deſire, every wish that you indulge, works its effect, & lays up for you either happineſs or misery. The nature of things is fixed, & you cannot alter it. If you indulge the evil inclinations of your nature; If you live as paſsion & appetite ſhall dictate, your enjoyments will all be mixed with disgust, your pleaſures made bitter by remorſe; Your happieſt days will be days of vexation, & old age will bring ſhame & contempt upon you.

I would to God this were the worst; that there was nothing for you to dread in another world. But the baneful influence of vice stops not here; It extends beyond the grave; It reaches into eternity,

nity; & there also its only, its certain fruit is miſery — miſery unallayed by hope; unmixed by temporal enjoyments. Miſery & eternity conjoined! dreadful thought! Nature recoils at it; horror attends it, & every consolation is ſhut out by despair.

There is nothing that can support the heart of man in the hour of death, & enable him to look without dread into eternity, but confidence in his God; And nothing can, on ſolid, reaſonable grounds, inspire this confidence, but a good life — a life spent in the fear & ſervice of God, & in the true faith of Jeſus the Mediator, the propitiation for the ſin of the world.

In the hour of death & in the day of judgment, have mercy on us, O God, for thy dear Sons ſake, Jeſus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

4 Lent. 1794 Setauket 4 ☉ Lent 1819

Sermon the fifth.

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Of Faith.

Heb. XI. 6.

But without faith it is impoſsible to pleaſe him; For he that cometh to God must believe that he is, & that he is a rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him.

So much is aſcribed to faith, in the Bible, & particularly in the New Testament, that our intereſt & duty both require that we should endeavour to obtain just notions of it. If it be a matter of conſequence to us to please God, it must also be a matter of conſequence to us to know, whether we have that faith, without which it is impoſsible to pleaſe him. If we judge wrong & ſuppoſe we have this faith when we have it not, we not only deceive ourselves, but shall probably fall into a ſecond error, the imagination that we are pleaſing God, when we are purſuing only our own imaginations.

That there is much confuſion & contradiction among Chriſtians concerning faith, muſt be evident to every one who hath heard or readde many diſcourſes on the ſubject. Strange & unintelligible things have been ſaid of it. Strange & incredible effects have been aſcribed to it. Some have ſet it above every thing else, I had almost said, above Christ himſelf, in the oeconomy of our ſalvation; ſuppoſing nothing to be neceſſary but faith only. Others have rated it so low as to aſcribe nothing to it; attributing all to virtue & moral righteouſneſs. Extremes frequently beget extremes. The former opinion probably gave rise to the latter.

To enumerate all the jarring opinions of Christians on this ſubject, would be fruitleſsly expending time & pains. Among them there can be only one right. Happy will it be for us, if we can find that one.

The beſt way to detect error, whoſe ways are various & almost infinite, is to point out the truth. In humble dependence on the goodneſs & merciful aſſiſtance of God, we will, therefore, apply ourſelves to aſcertain what that faith is which he requires; trusting that we shall be thereby not only excited to endeavour to obtain it, but to pleaſe him who is the rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him.

In this inquiry we ought, as much as poſſible, to lay aſide all previous ſyſtem & opinion; the prejudices of education & of religious party. If we do ſo, a candid mind, it is conceived, will find no great difficulty to pick out the true faith from the midst of that confuſion in which human ſyſtem & infirmity have involved it.

The best mode of procedure undoubtedly is to compare ſcripture with ſcripture. But in doing so, two cautions are neceſsary. One is, that we let ſcripture fairly speak for itself. This indeed is an instance of candour; & may be ſupposed to be implied in what was said above. My excuse for mentioning of it here is the constant danger we are in of impoſing on ourselves. We are apt to have ſuch a fondneſs for our own opinions, however we came by them, as sometimes makes us fancy we ſee them confirmed by expreſsions in the ſcriptures, which fairly dealt with, would convey a very different meaning.

Another neceſsary caution is, to remember that the ſcripture is Gods revelation, & not the compoſition of human reason, or the reſult of natural light. I do not mean that reason & the light of nature are to be abandoned. Reason & understanding are neceſsary to discover the meaning of the ſcriptures; & the light of nature will not be without its use in inquiries of this kind. But revelation relation has in ſome respects a language of its own. It is, therefore, but fair to understand its language & phrases upon its own principles

In disquisitions of every kind it is best to begin with the ſimplest points. They are the easiest to be understood, & lead to greater knowledge; ſerving as a clue to direct the mind, step by step, till it comes to the end it *seeks.*

In the text we find the expressions of *pleasing God*; of *coming to God*, of *ſeeking God*, & faith is made neceſſary to them all. These, & ſuch like expreſsions in the ſcriptures, as *walking with God* &c: always mean *receiving the revelation of God, & living according to it.*

St. Paul saith Enoch *had this testimony that he pleased God* (Heb. XI. 5) In the account we have of Enoch it is said *he walked with God* (Gen. V. 22, 24) What is meant by *walking with God*, we learn from Moses, who said to the people of Israel, *Thou shalt keep the commandments of the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, & to fear him* (Deut. VIII. 6) What commandments were these which the Israelites were to keep? Those certainly which God had proclaimed from Sinai, together with those which he, from time to time, gave them by the mediation of Moses. To *walk with God*, or in his ways, is to keep his commandments. When, therefore Enoch is said to please God by *walking with him*, it is to be understood of keeping his commandments — receiving faithfully the revelations God made to him, & punctually obeying all his directions.

I do not meet with a parallel expression in the scripture with that of *coming to God* in the text. The expression of *coming to Christ* is more than once used, & means to receive & acknowledge him as the Saviour of the world — to accept & obey the revelation of Gods will which he made. *Ye will not come to me*, said he to the Jews, *that ye may have life*. What he meant by *coming to him that they might have life*, he ſufficiently explained when he said, *If a man keep my sayings, he ſhall never ſee death* (John V. 40. VIII. 51)

To *ſeek God* is a phraſe of the ſame meaning; though it is ſometimes reſtrained to ſignify the particular duty of prayer to God. Isaiah declaring the judgements of God against idolators, saith, *When they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar ſpirits* &c: he adds, *Should not a people ſeek unto their God? To the law, & to the teſtimony*; that is, Attend to the law, & to the ſcriptures of your God, & obey them, & run not after the idle imaginations of pretended ſorcerers & fortune-tellers.

By the same prophet God reproves the hypocrisy of the Jews, & says, They seek me daily, & delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, & forsook not the ordinances of their God (58.2)

The testimony of David may be added to that of Isaiah. *Seek the Lord, & his strength: Seek his face forevermore.* How this was to be done, the next words inform us. *Remember the marvellous works that he hath done, his wonders & the judgments of his mouth* (Ps. CV. 4,5)

I will not multiply quotations further than to add the authority of St. Paul to what was said of *pleasing God*. *We beseech & exhort you, by the Lord Jesus, that as you have received of us how you ought to walk, & to please God, so ye would abound more & more. For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus* (1 Thess. IV. 1,2) It was by doing those commandments, it seems, that they were to please God. So that the meaning of theſe expreſsions is, to receive, or embrace in the heart, the revelations of God, & to do~~ing~~ his commands.

In the text it is said to be impoſsible to please God without faith. What then is faith? Neither more nor leſs than believing the revelations, & doing the commandments of God. It is a single word expreſsing both theſe particulars. And to ſay that without faith we cannot pleaſe God, is saying no more than that we cannot please God, without believing ~~& obeying~~ & obeying him.

In the firſt verſe of the context faith is defined to be The substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. If we examine this definition, we shall find it gives the same notion of faith with that I have mentioned. The word here translated ſubstance, ὑποστασις, is ſeveral times uſed in the New Testament, & in our Bible generally, if not always rendered by the word confidence, this one place excepted. In the Biſhops Bible it is englished by the word ground, faith is the ground of things hoped for. St. Paul uſes the word when ſpeaking of his boasting — in this confidence of boasting (2 Cor. XI. 17) Now though St. Paul was driven into this boasting by the arrogant pretentions of false brethren, yet he certainly had a confidence that the things of which he did boast were true. This language we can easily understand — Faith is the ground, the confidence, the aſsurance, the certain expectation, of things hoped for; the evidence of things not seen — that which argues, or testifies to us things not ſeen with our bodily eyes. Take both parts of the definition, thus explained, together, & they will amount to this, Faith is the confidence of enjoying the things we hope for; It is that [illegible] which argues, or persuades us of the existence of things we do not see.

There are but three ways by which the human mind can receive information of any kind. One is by our bodily ſenſes, through which external objects make impreſsions on us, aſsure us of their existence, & enable us to judge of their qualities. The information we thus get is properly knowledge. We are not said to *believe*, but to know thoſe things of which our ſenſes give us notice.

Another way of information is by our underſtanding. We have the ability of comparing our thoughts & notions together, & of perceiving wherein they agree or differ; & by so doing we come to the knowlege of many things of which our bodily ſenſes cannot inform us; but which are *clearly ſeen*, that is perceived by the mind;

being *understood*, by comparing our thoughts, or ideas together, & drawing concluſion from the comparison. This is called *reaſoning*. [And when the principles are true, & the reaſoning just, the concluſion will be true also. One ſpecies of reaſoning is mathematical demonstration; This is employed chiefly on quantities, & is as certain as knowledge acquired by the ſenses, tho' obtained in a different way.

The third mode of information is by the testimony of others. This is not knowledge, strictly speaking, but faith. We are accustomed to uſe the words as though they had the same meaning; & to ſay we *know*, when we only *believe*. Yet on this belief we rely so much, that most of the busineſs of the world is transacted on it.

When we believe things to be, which we have not ſeen, & of ~~which~~ whoſe existence our understanding gives us no certain information, on the testimony of thoſe who have ſeen them, we have faith, & our faith is founded on the opinion we have of the veracity & judgement of the informer. If we have no doubt of his veracity, or capacity of judging, our faith will be full & strong; but will be weakened in proportion as we doubt of either.

What we believe on the testimony of men, particularly with relation to the things of this world, is human faith. What we believe on the testimony of God, or of thoſe who act by authority from him, & in relation to the things of religion & another life, is *divine* faith, the ſubject of which we now treat.

It is obſerved by St. Paul, that *faith cometh by hearing* (Rom. X.17) What we ſee & feel we know; but ~~hearing~~ the ear is the only inlet to faith; for by hearing only can we receive the testimony

of

others. And hearing, he adds, cometh by the word of God. The word or declaration of God, heard by ourselves, or reported to us by those who have heard it, & on whose veracity, capacity of judging, & authority we can depend, must be the foundation of faith. Faith, therefore, stands on the veracity & authority of God. He is true & cannot deceive. He is good & can command nothing unnecessary. He is just & will perform what he declares.

Let us apply what hath been said to St. Pauls definition of faith — Faith is the confidence of things hoped for. God hath been pleased to make many great promises to us by his Son; among which the principal are, remission of sins, resurrection from death, & everlasting life. Faith is the confidence, or assured expectation,

tation, of poſseſsing these promiſes. We hope, because we believe; We believe because God hath promiſed. Our belief, or faith in Gods promises, is, therefore, the ground of our hope, or the confidence of our expectation that he will, in the way & manner he hath promised, make good the word that is gone from his mouth. When this faith is so full & ſtrong that it brings us to do what God hath commanded — to keep his laws, obey his will, obſerve his institutions, follow his directions, with a ſincere & upright heart, we are properly said to come to God, to please God, to ſeek God, to walk with God, to abide in God.

The just shall live by his faith was said by the prophet Habakkuk, & is twice quoted from him by St. Paul (Rom. I. 17. Heb. X. 38) This text hath been erroneously ſuppoſed to mean, that the just shall inherit eternal life, or be saved by faith. Its true import however is that faith in the promiſes of God is the governing principle of the juſt mans life — that his whole conduct is regulated by his belief of what God hath declared. It is ſaying no more than St. Paul hath said of all good Chriſtians, *We walk by faith, not by ſight* (2 Cor. V.7) This is evident from what immediately follows, *But if any man draw back*, renounce his faith, & no longer make it the rule of his life, the ground of his obedience, *God will have no pleaſure in him*.

The reaſon, then, why without faith it is impoſsible to pleaſe God, is, that without believing God it is impoſsible we ſhould obey him. And this is the whole virtue & end of faith, to lead us to do what God commands — to expect life everlasting from following implicitly & exactly all the directions he hath been pleaſed to give us by his Son.

Let us now try the other part of the definition —

Of Faith.

Faith is *the evidence of things not ſeen*. The gracious promiſes I mentioned, the remiſsion of ſins, the reſurrection from death, & eternal life through Christ, are not ſeen by us; but we believe them on the testimony of God by his Son. It is our faith wich testifies to us the reality of these things which our eyes ſee not. And this believing God upon Christs testimony, is proper Christian faith.

That there are such things to be obtained thro' him he declared with his own mouth, & by his apostles. He proved himſelf worthy of all credit, by signs & wonders, which could not be wrought but by the power of God; by dying on the croſs, by riſing from the dead, by aſcending viſibly into heaven, & by ſending the Holy Ghost on his apostles, whom he had commiſsioned to preach the glad tidings of ſalvation in his name.

Here then faith is to the mind what eyes are to the body. Our eyes aſcertain to us the existence of objects round us; faith in the testimony of God aſcertains to us the existence of the inviſible things of another world. When our belief is so strong & undoubting as to bring us into obedience to God, making us do what he hath commanded, & refrain from what he hath forbidden, that we may obtain his promises, then is faith completely *the evidence of things not ſeen*, the confident aſsurance, the ſubſtantial expectation *of things hoped for.*

We need not, then, be ſurpriſed to find ſo much attribute to faith in religion; especially in the Christian religion, established on the mediation & atonement of Jesus Christ, & ſupported by ſuch great & precious promises, which are the objects of faith, not of ſense; & which can lead to the neceſsary qualifications for heavenly happineſs, an obedient & holy life, through faith only.

Till we believe the revelation of God by his Son, we can not receive it, nor depend on it, that is we cannot be Christians, believers in Christ. Nor can we do the commandments of God, nor hope to enjoy the promises he hath made, till we believe he hath given commandments to direct our conduct, & made promises to ensure our obedience. To ſuppoſe, that when ſalvation is aſcribed to faith, or to believing in Chriſt, without any mention of obedience, that it was intended to make a ſeparation between them, is an error which may be attended with dangerous consequences. God hath joined them together, & they cannot subsist apart. The whole of our ſalvation is sometimes aſcribed to one, sometimes to the other: When it is aſcribed to obedience, ſuch an obedience as ſprings from faith is ever intended, & when to faith, such a faith is meant as produceth obedience.

The misinterpretation of some expreſsions of St. Paul, in his controversy with the Jewish converts to Christianity, about the neceſsity of obſerving the law of Moſes, hath led many people into error in this matter. In that controversy he sometimes calls the Gospel, faith, & the Law, works. When he aſcribes ſalvation to faith, & denies it to works, his true meaning is, that we are ſaved by the dispensation of the Gospel; that is, through the mediation of Christ; & not by the dispensation of the law, that is, through the mediation of Moſes. For Christ being our mediator & not Moſes, His Gospel, & not the law must be the rule of our faith & practice.

The same apostle saith, *We are saved by hope* (Rom. VIII. 24) Can any one from hence suppose that we are to be saved merely *by hoping*, without beliving & doing what that hope implies? He saith also, *By grace are ye saved*. Grace is but another word for *favour*, or mercy; & frequently means the Gospel, the greatest favour & richest mercy of God to us (Eph. II. 5, 8)

When salvation is attributed to any particular eminent quality which the Gospel requires, to faith, hope, to Grace &c: it has but one meaning; namely, that we are to be saved by Christ, through the dispensation of the Gospel. For the Gospel exhibits the whole mediation of Christ as the cause of our salvation — his incarnation, obedience, atonement, satisfaction, resurrection, intercession, his promises & commands. These taken together make up the

Gospel, or dispensation of life through Jesus Christ. And this whole Gospel we must receive & obey if we would obtain its benefits. We have no right to divide it into parts, & then receive ſome & reject others. Its atonement & commands, its promises & institutions, its threats & prohibitions, must be equally welcome to us, & equally regarded by us. All this is included in that faith *by which we are saved*. *Ye are my friends*, said Christ to his apostles, *if ye do whatsoever I command you* (Jo. XV. 14) And to the Jews, *If a man keep my sayings, he shall never ſee death*; in other words, he shall inherit eternal life (Jo. VIII. 51)

The duty of a Christian, therefore, extends to the whole Gospel, & requires him aſsuredly to believe all that it teaches, & faithfully to do all that it commands.

This is the faith without which *it is impoſsible to please God*; *For he that cometh to God*, that is in the way of any duty, *must believe that he is*; & this faith respects the first part of the apostles definition; It is the confidence, the aſsurance of things not ſeen; For God is invisible to us, & his existence must be apprehended by faith, not by sight. We must believe also that *God is the rewarder of those who diligently ſeek him*. In this ſenſe faith relates to the ſecond part of the definition, & is the ſubstantial hope, the earnest expectation of things not ſeen, the promises of God, the completion of which we ſee not now, but ardently expect & hope to enjoy.

These are the foundation of all religion. Without the belief of Gods being, & that he will be good to us & make us happy, there would be neither ground nor encouragement for any religious worship or duty. Both these points Christianity hath established, & it calls us to the principle of faith, that they may have their full effect on us.

If we compare the apostles definition of faith with what he hath said of it in the text, & take into the account the instances of its effects produced in the patriarchs & prophets, no reasonable doubt will remain of the meaning of the word, or of the neceſsity of including obedience in it, or, at least, of ſuppoſing it to be neceſsarily connected with it. The former hath been done in this ſermon. A little attention to the latter will ſhew us that every instance of faith mentioned by the apostle, is exemplified by some instance of obedience to the will of God. Abel *offered* sacrifice, Enoch *walked* with God, Noah *built* the ark &c: Call these things works, obedience, what you please; They were instances of their faith; By them their faith was perfected, which without them would have been dead, & of no avail.

St. Paul having ſaid that Abraham was juſtified by faith (Rom.) mentions his *offering* up his ſon, as an instance of that faith by which he was juſtified.

Faith & obedience must not, therefore, be ſeperated; *For as the body without the ſpirit is dead, ſo faith without works of obedience, is dead also* (Jas. II. 26)

3 Adv. 1793.

Sermon the sixth.

An Advent Sermon.

2 Cor. V. 10.

We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good, or bad.

The words of the text are so plain that the bare repeating of them lets us fully into their meaning. They declare,

1. The certainty of a future judgment.
2. The person by whom it shall be exercised.
3. The persons liable to it, &
4. Upon what account they shall be judged.

1. The text declares the certainty of a future

judgment, *We must all appear before the judgment-ſeat of Christ.*

That there shall be a future judgment the holy scriptures in ſeveral places declare; They also declare that it shall be held at the end of the world, after the reſurrection. Our Saviour hath deſcribed the proceſs of it (Matt. XXV) His apostles frequently remind their converts of it, & inculcate its dreadful solemnity on them; in order to deter them from doing evil, & to confirm them in the practice of Christian holineſs.

On no other principle can we account for the promiscuous dealings of divine providence with men in this world, & for the ſeeming inattention of God to their moral conduct. We often see the same disasterous circumstances happen to the good, which happen to the bad. Nay we sometimes find villany successful, & tryumphing in prosperity, while virtue is oppressed & trodden underfoot. Unless, therefore, there be a judgment to come, when every person shall be treated according to his deserts, & a full distinction made between the righteous & the wicked, the justice of God's providence, & moral government cannot be vindicated.

But when we consider the matter in the light in which the holy scriptures have set it, all difficulty is removed. They represent this life as a state of trial, & that we know is not the time for rewards & punishments. They describe God as exercising great patience & forbearance towards sinners in this world, that his goodness may bring them to repentance, & give them time & opportunity for amendment.

Here, also they inform us the righteous are disciplined, by trouble & affliction & temptation, into conformity to the will of God; that learning obedience, submission, & resignation to him, they may, like gold from the furnace of the refiner, be freed from the dross of worldly desires, & earthly views, & fleshly lusts – be presented pure before their judge, & be found of him in peace, without spot, & blameless.

2. From the text we learn who the person is by whom this judgment shall be exercised; namely Jesus Christ our Lord.

That this judgment is committed unto Christ, is declared in many passages of the Scriptures. The Father, said he himself, judgeth no man; but hath committed all judgment unto the Son (Jo. V. 22) In another place he said, When the Son of man shall come in his glory, & all the holy angels with him, then ſhall he ſit upon the throne of his glory; And before him shall be gathered all nations; & he ſhall seperate them one from another, as a ſhepherd divideth his ſheep from the goats &c (Matt. XXV. 31, 32)

The Scriptures not only inform us that the judgment at the last day is committed to Jesus Christ, they also aſsign the reasons upon which this hath been done.

One reason is that he might receive a reward of his ſufferings & humiliation in human nature, by having that nature exalted to so great dignity & glory, that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father (Jo. V. 23) Christ, saith St. Paul, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God — but was made in the likeneſs of men,

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& became obedient to death, even the death of the croſs. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, & given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, & things in earth, & things under the earth; And that every tongue should confeſs, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Philipp. II. 6 &c) The expreſsions of bowing the knee & confeſsing to Christ are principally to be underſtood of ſubmitting to him as Judge of the world; for in that sense St. Paul useth them in another place. We ſhall stand before the judgement-seat of Christ, for it is written, as I live saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, & every tongue shall confeſs to God (Rom. XIV. 11)

In this manner hath God thought good to reward the ſuffering humanity, & perfect obedience of his beloved Son. He who was depressed to the lowest state by the powers of the world, is exalted to the highest eminency by the power of God. He who was rejected & despised of men, shall be attended on by a host of angels. He who was arraigned & condemned at an earthly tribunal, is made judge of the world, & shall summon before him all flesh, not only the low & the mean, the vile & despised among men, but the great ones also of the earth, kings, & princes, & governors of the world, & they shall receive their sentence from his mouth.

Another reason which the scriptures give why this judgment is committed to the Son is, that the justice & goodness of God might be manifested by his appointing one in our own nature to be our judge. For this reason whenever Christ is spoken of as judge of the world, he is always called, the Son of man.

In human judicatories we esteem it a privilege to be tried by our equals, by men nearly of the ſame station & circumstances with ourselves, because they are most likely to attend to every thing that can be urged in our favour, & to ſhield us as well from the over rigid execution of the law, as from the power of the great. When the Son of God took human nature on him, he became like unto us in all things, ſin only excepted. He bore our temptations, he felt our infirmities: And having felt them, he will pity us under them, & make every allowance of which our case will admit.

3. From the text we learn who the persons are who are liable to undergo this judgment; namely all mankind.

In other places as well as in the text this point is declared in the ſcriptures. The authority of Christ,

Christ hath been already cited, that when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, all nations shall be gathered before him. In the Acts of the apostles he is said to be ordained of God to be the judge of the quick & dead (X. 42) that is of all who have ever lived, whether they be alive or dead at his coming: For the dead shall be raised from the grave, that, together with the living, they may undergo the sentence of the judge.

From this judgment no situation of life will exempt men, no station protect them. The prince & the peasant, the king & the subject, the master & the slave shall then be brought to the same level, & their good or evil qualities alone shall mark any distinction between them.

The rich & the powerful are deeply interested in this consideration. It ought to sink into their hearts, & guard them against that pride & vanity with which power & prosperity are apt to fill the human mind. *Pride was not made for man* (Eccl. X.18) Humility conſtitutes the real dignity of his nature; & as it leads to a meek & benevolent deportment towards his fellow creatures, so it reſembles him most to the infinite ſource of all perfection, & ſets him highest in the favour of God.

The same conſideration should encourage the poor, & weak, & friendleſs to ſupport the dignity of their reasonable nature by humility & patience — to be very careful not to debase it by pride & arrogance, not to ſink it into meanneſs by any appearance of affecting thoſe distinctions & manners which mark the characters of the rich & powerful. By calling them to a state of poverty & helpleſsneſs in this world, God hath more especially called them to meekneſs, humility, & dependence on himſelf.

These qualities only can really exalt their nature & bring it to that perfection in holiness which their religion is intended to produce.

The consideration of the equality of all ranks, stations, & conditions of life before God at the day of judgement, except the distinction which arises from virtue & holiness, should convince us all, that religion is of equal concern to every one of us. Its design is to make men virtuous & holy, by training them up in the fear & service of God, in obedience to his holy will, according to the principles of Christs religion. By the laws of that religion they shall be judged, & acquitted or condemned according as they have obeyed, or lived in opposition to that manifestation of the divine ~~of the divine~~ will which Christ hath made.

The Christian religion is, therefore, of the utmost consequence, & of equal importance to us all. It concerns the rich as much as the poor; the mighty &

powerful, as much as the weak & friendleſs; the wise & learned, as much as the simple & ignorant. These distinctions are of no avail with God, with regard to the iſsue of the general judgement, &, therefore, they are of no importance to us, in that life which will prepare us for it.

Vain & ridiculous, therefore, is the opinion which the conduct of many rich & prosperous persons gives us room to ſuspect they entertain: And I wish the same observation may not be made of many of thoſe who only hold the ſtation of mediocrity in the world; namely, that religion is proper only for the mean, & poor, & unfortunate part of mankind; for thoſe who have it not in their power to enjoy the grandeur, & pleaſures, & vanities of the world. *They* may look to the prospect of future happineſs in another world; In this they can enjoy nothing: And as they want something, as a cordial, to ſupport their hopes & spirits while they live here, they may be right to attend to the voice of religion, which calls them to the hopes of happineſs in another life. But for thoſe who have the enjoyments of this life within their reach, idle would it be in them to forego the pleasures of ſense, & look to the distant prospect of another world for the reward of virtue.

So the wisdom of this world may teach us to determine. This world, however, is enmity with God, & its *wisdom earthly, sensual, devilish*; its *fruits is confusion & every evil work* (Ja. III. 15,16) its end misery. Prudence will direct us to look to the end of things, & not to be deceived by present appearances.

Look forward then to the general judgment at the last day, & let that have its proper influence in the determination you make in this matter. You will then know that the rich & the great will, at that time, be of no more estimation in the eyes of God, than the mean & low in the estimation of the world: That if they obtain their wealth & greatness by any other than virtuous means; if they enjoy & use them with other dispositions than those inspired by the holy principles of Christianity, the meanest virtuous man will, in that awful ſcene, be prefered before them — will then hear that joyful voice of their Redeemer & judge, Come ye blessed children of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world, while they themselves shall be cast out.

As, therefore, the most exalted state in this world will not exempt us from the judgment of God, so neither will it exempt us from that attention to our holy religion which its nature requires, nor from those obligations to virtue which its laws lay upon us.

How melancholy then is the prospect, when we ſee the generality of those who, profeſs~~ing~~ the religion of Jesus, & call themselves by his name, spurn the precepts of their holy religion, & eagerly pursue the

wealth

[These things are worthy of our highest regard, & I pray God they may have their full influence on us. Then should we earnestly endeavour by Gods grace to live in obedience to his holy religion; that when he shall call the world to judgment, we may not be ashamed before him, but hearing ~~of~~ our acquittal from his mouth, may inherit with

him the Kingdom of Gods glory —
Grant this heavenly Father to us all,
for Xts sake, our Lord. Amen.

wealth & pleasures of the world! as though worldly prosperity set them above the obligations of religion, & left them at liberty to indulge their sensual appetites without restraint. [That the vanity of such a conceit, the folly of such a conduct may more fully appear, let us consider upon what account it is that men shall be judged.

4. This was the fourth thing that we are informed of in the text, namely, that the design of the general judgment is, *that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad*.

The judgment of the last day is, therefore, intended to display the justice of God, to vindicate his ways to angels & to men, by rewarding every man according to his deeds, — according to that eternal & essential difference that there is between virtue & vice, good & evil — according as he hath lived in obedience to the will of God, or acted in opposition to it, by following the spirit of the world, & the dictates of his own evil nature. Then shall the intricacies &, apparently, inconsistencies of divine providence be fully cleared. The prosperity of the wicked, & the affliction of the good shall no more reproach the governor of the world. Then shall it appear that, in the heigth of their prosperity, the wicked stood in slippery places, when we see them suddenly cast down, & come to a fearful end. (Ps. LXXIII 17, 18) Then also shall it appear, that the faith of the righteous rested on the rock of ages, & that their obedience sprung from confidence in the God of their salvation, when we see them exalted from poverty, reproach, & affliction of every kind, to honour, & dignity, & glory everlasting in the kingdom of God.

Virtue, properly speaking, is every thing that tends to the happiness of man; vice every thing that leads to misery. Every man, therefore, by his virtuous or vicious conduct, makes & forms his own state of happineſs or misery; And the future judgment is the final consigning him over to that state which he hath made & formed for himself. They who live godly, righteously, & soberly here, & continue patiently in well doing, till God shall call them out of the world, shall, at the day of judgment, receive glory, honour, & immortality—eternal life—that heavenly happineſs which God hath promised—which their holy tempers, divine dispositions, & faithful perseverance in well-doing qualify them to enjoy. While they who obey not the truth—the Gospel of God—but obey unrighteouſneſs, shall receive ~~that~~ indignation & wrath, tribulation & anguish—that misery unspeakable, which is the natural & neceſsary portion of every soul of man that doth evil (Rom. II. 7)

Though, therefore, the prosperity of the world may tempt men to ſeek their happineſs in bodily pleasure, let them remember, for that thing God will bring them into judgment, & will render to them & to every man according to his deeds, in the day when he shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ (Rom. II. 6, 16) Then shall they reap what they have sown; eat the fruit of their own ways, & enjoy the portion they have provided for themselves.

Think not that theſe conſiderations which I set before you are immaginary, or that I paint the dreadful conſequences of vice & sin with too strong or unnatural colours. What I have ſaid is taken from the book of God, who cannot lie, or deceive the children of men. Through love & goodneſs he hath revealed to men the terrors of the future judgment, that by them they might be prevailed on to forſake thoſe ſins, & vices, & lusts, the indulgence of which
will

will ſink them in misery without end.

Knowing these terrors of the Lord, I would, in imitation of his holy apostle, fain persuade you to be influenced by them, & by repentance flee from the wrath to come.

Let me then exhort & prevail on you to comply with the grace, or Gospel of God which bringeth & offereth ſalvation to all men: Teaching us that denying ungodlineſs & worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, & godly in this present world. Then may you with confidence look for that bleſsed hope, & the glorious appearing of the great God even our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, for this expreſs purpoſe, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, & purify to himself a peculiar people zealous of good works.

This was the design of Christs first advent, when he came, to visit the world, in great humility. But at the last day he shall come again, not as a Lamb, to take away the sin of the world by the sacrifice of himself, nor as a mild light, to teach ſinners in the way of life, & reclaim them from error & ſin; but in glorious majesty, as the judge of the world; to take cognizance of the deeds of men, & to sentence every one to that ſtate which his own conduct hath formed for him.

The measure of this judgment, the ſcriptures inform us, will be the talents, opportunities, & abilities of knowing & obeying the will of God, with which different men have been favoured. Unto whomſoever much hath been given, of him, at that time, much will be required (Lu. XII.48) The extent of this judgment will be *all things done in the body*, that retribution may be made to every one according to that he shall have done, *whether it be good or bad*.

By the things done in the body are intended, not only the open & overt actions which have been done, but also the tempers & dispositions which have been indulged, the words of the mouth, the thoughts & intentions of the heart. Our Saviour hath told us, *that every idle word* – by which must be meant, at least, every wicked word – *that men shall speak*, *they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment*. The reason is added, *For by thy words thou shalt be justified*, that is acquitted; *& by thy words thou shalt be condemned* (Matt. XII. 36, 37)

That this judgment shall extend also beyond our words, even to our ſecret thoughts & intentions, appears not only from the declaration of St. Paul, that *God shall judge the ſecrets of men by Jesus Christ* (Rom. II. 16) but from the reason of the thing. Our actions & words are but the result of our tempers & dispositions; they flow from the thoughts & designs of the heart. In many instances words & actions become evil, & owe their whole malignity ty to the wicked thoughts & intentions of the heart from whence they proceed. Unless, therefore, those thoughts & intentions be taken into the account, no just judgment can be made of the words & actions which proceed from them.

We are apt to think that such light & transient things as thoughts, are little worth regarding. But the thoughts of the heart not only shew—they form its state; & the heart surely is, & will be according to the nature of the thoughts which it customarily indulges. Prudent people, will, therefore, watch their thoughts as well as their words & actions, because they know, without attention to *them*, they never can command *these*. Wicked thoughts habitually indulged, will produce wicked designs, & when opportunity offers, will end in wicked actions. There is, therefore, no sure guard against wicked words & actions, but by guarding the heart, that wicked thoughts may not be harboured there. For this reason it was that the wisdom of Solomon directed to, Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.

If the secret thoughts of men shall be brought into judgment, how much more their private actions? Vain therefore, is the imagination which people of loose principles sometimes indulge — that if they sin secretly, they sin securely. Secure indeed will such people be from the cognizance & punishment of human laws, while they can keep their crimes from public observation. But the eyes of their judge are upon the ways of men, & he seeth all their goings (Job. XXXIV. 21) And there is no darkness, nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves; (V. 22) but all things are naked & opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do (Heb. IV. 13)

Seeing, therefore, these things are so, what manner of persons ought we to be, in all holy conversation & godliness, that we may, without confusion, look for the *coming of the day of God*; when we shall be judged concerning the things done in the body, & shall be acquitted or condemned according as they have been good or bad. It highly concerns us now, to make that distinction in our thoughts, & words, & actions; in the tempers & dispoſitions of our hearts, which the law of our nature & the Gospel of Christ have already made; & which our judge aſsuredly will make, when he shall put a period to the present world, & manifest to men & to angels the righteousneſs of his dealings with the children of men.

We cannot plead ignorance in excuse for a wicked life. The Gospel is before us, in which is revealed the wrath of God against the workes of iniquity. If we reject the Gospel, & refuse to be governed by it, it will be more tolerable for Tyre & Sidon, for Sodom & Gomorrha, in the day of judgement, that is, for the most incorrigible ſinners before the publication

cation of the Gospel, than for us. They lived in the times of ignorance, when God winked at the follies & wickedness of men, because he had not then fully made known his detestation of them. But now he hath commanded all men every where to repent, because he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; &, of this his intention, hath given assurance unto all men, by raising him from the dead.

If we profess to believe the Gospel, & yet live wickedly under it, our condemnation will be no less heavy than theirs who reject it. If we sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, that is the knowledge of the Gospel, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain – a sure & fearful looking for of judgment & fiery indignation (Heb. X. 26)

To sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, means the continuance in the habits of known ſin, after the revelation of the Gospel hath been published to us. For those who do so, there is, there can be no security against the judgment of God. Repentance only can reconcile them to God through the atonement of Christ. Then will their judge be their advocate & Saviour; And as he hath saved them in this world from the power of sin, by the grace of repentance, so will he ſave them in the world to come from its guilt & its condemnation. But if they continue in wickedneſs in opposition to the Gospel & grace of God, & die without repentance, place their dependence on what else they will, it will deceive them — it will not bear the ſeverity of his judgment, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, & with whom no impure thing can dwell.

These things, which I have represented to you, deserve your serious & deliberate consideration.

It is but reasonable that you should bestow some of your time in reflecting on that death & judgment which must at last come upon you. Stiffle not then, I beſeech you, all serious impreſsions that the word, or grace, or providence of God may make on you: But cherish them by reflection, & ſuffer them to have their full force upon you. The love of pleasure, attachment to busineſs, fondneſs for vanity, the habits of appetite & paſsion may concur to drive off the pious purpoſes, & good desires, & devout wishes that may sometimes form themselves within you. But remember all good desires & holy purpoſes are from the Spirit of God; & if they are not checked & quenched by yourselves, they will, like good ſeed in good ground, grow & increase, till they bring forth the fruits of holineſs & righteouſneſs in this life, of happineſs & glory, in the life to come.

Remember too, If your religion, your faith in the Gospel, do not correct your evil tempers, restrain the inordinancy of paſsion, & reform the faults of your lives, it does nothing for you to any good purpose. You may as well be Heathens as Christians — as well believe in Mahomet as Christ. Among the various sects of Christianity, you may shift your profeſsion as you will, grow enamoured of particular doctrines, be delighted with particular preachers, put on the external garb of the most rigid sanctity; unleſs your evil tempers, & paſsions, & lusts be mortified & corrected, you will finally fall under the condemnation of your judge. Without holineſs no man shall see God. Every thing else will fail you, depend upon it as you will.

Beloved, ye know these things — *Cleanse*, therefore, *yourselves from all filthineſs of flesh & spirit; perfecting holineſs in the fear of God* (2 Cor. VII.1) *Add to your faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godlineſs, brotherly-kindneſs & charity; That being found of your judge in peace, without spot & blameleſs, an entrance may be ministered to you abundantly, into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord & Saviour, Jesus Christ.* Amen.

Sermon the Seventh.

The terrors of the last judgment.

2 Cor. V. 11.

Knowing therefore the terrors of the Lord, we perſuade men.

It hath pleased God to bring us again to the last Sunday of Advent; ~~when~~ In this season, by the pious care of the Church, the ſcene of the final judgment of the world is ſet before us. Devoutly thankful ought we to be to our heavenly Father, that we are alive, & well enough to meet here together to meditate on that awful ſubject. Many of our neighbours have been ~~have been~~ called out of this transitory world into that state, where there is *no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom* — where nothing can be done to prepare for that dreadful ſolemnity.

their day of grace is ended. To the mercy of God we leave them; hoping for their happy acquittal before his judgment ſeat, & beſeeching his grace & holy Spirit for ourselves, that we may ever live in ſuch Christian holineſs & purity, as will enable us to look with confidence for that day of God, the glorious appearing of the great God, even our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Knowing the weakneſses of nature, the temptations to which we are expoſed, & the prevalence of bodily pleaſures, by which we are frequently beguiled & led away from our Christian course, the Church, with the tender affection of a parent, hath, in the annual circle of her offices, laid our whole duty before us, & enforced it on us, by all the motives that ought to influence reaſonable men.

The Festival of Christmas presents to our contemplation the nativity of our Redeemer — God manifest in the flesh. He came to be the Glory of his people Israel; in that view he was circumcised & became obedient to the Law, that glory might accrue to God through obedience to his institution; And also that he might teach us the necessity of the true circumcision of the Spirit, that our hearts & all our members being mortified from all worldly & carnal lusts, we might in all things obey the blessed will of God.

He came also to be a light to lighten the Gentiles, that the name of God might be great among them, & that in every place incense might be offered to him, & a pure offering (Mal. I. 11) The manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles is celebrated by the Church on the Festival of the Epiphany; & the Gospels of the subsequent Sundays present to our view the earlier transactions of Christ's life, which displayed his eternal ~~power~~ & Godhead.

on Good-Friday; [illegible]

Redeemer for the sin of the world are commemorated with their day of grace is ended. To the mercy of God we leave them; hoping for their happy acquittal before his judgment-ſeat, & beſeeching his grace & holy Spirit for ourselves, that we may ever live in such Christian holineſs & purity as will enable us to look with confidence for that day of God, the glorious appearing of the great God, even our Saviour Jesus Christ.

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Our own sinful nature, our unworthy conduct, the necessity of repentance & amendment, the duty of fasting, & the mortification of our lusts & passions, are the subject, & ought to be the practice of the forty days of Lent. ~~[illegible]~~

On Good-friday, the crucifixion & death of our Redeemer for the sin of the world are commemorated with devout adoration & holy fasting. So that what Christ did, & taught, & ſuffered for our redemption, are exhibited to our view in the Epistles, & Goſpels, & ſervice of the Church, from Christmas to Easter; At the same time the Church endeavours to stir up thoſe affections in us, & that practice which are ſuitable to these great things which Christ hath done for us.

At Easter we celebrate his reſurrection from the dead, when he burst for us the bands of death, & roſe in tryumph from the grave. On Holy Thursday his aſcenſion into heaven, as our forerunner, the Great High Priest of our profeſsion; & on Whitsunday the pouring out of the Holy Ghost on his Apostles & followers, to be the Governor & ſanctifier of his Church, are made the ſacred ſubject of grateful praise & adoration to almighty God, Father, Son, & Holy Ghost, the one God of Christians; And on Trinity Sunday the mystery of this holy & undivided Trinity in unity is devoutly celebrated & adored.

In this period - from Christmas to ~~Easter~~ Trinity Sunday we are taught in the Church, the true Catholic Faith, what we are to believe, that we may be sound members of Christs mystical body, & entitled to the promises & privileges belonging to it.

From Trinity Sunday to the Sundays of Advent, the practical duties of our religion - those which arise from the faith that hath been taught us, - are laid before us, & inculcated on us in the Epistles & Gospels ſelected for the purpose. And in the Sundays of Advent we are called on to prepare ourselves to celebrate the Nativity of Christ, with ſuitable ſentiments & affections, & to recollect & prepare ourſelves for that awful judgment which awaits us all at his ſecond Advent, the great day of retribution — to look back on our past lives,

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& ſee whether we are in faith & practice, ſuch perſons as the Gospel requires us to be, that we may at that day be found of our judge in peace.

Beſides all this, through the whole year, days are interſperſed, in which we commemorate the eminent Saints & ſervants of God, the holy Apostles & Martyrs, who were the bleſsed instruments of God to spread the knowledge of ſalvation thro' the world, the choice veſsels of his grace & mercy, the lights of the world in their ſeveral generations. In their lives they exemplified the truths of the holy religion they taught, & have given us reason to bleſs God for the patterns they have ſet us, & to endeavour ourselves to follow the example of their piety & Christian conversation.

In what other ſociety of Christians will you find ſuch ample provision made for your increaſe & growth in grace; for your Christian conduct in this world, & for your ſalvation in the world to come? Abide therefore in her communion, reverence her worship, & pay a dutiful regard to all her directions. And that you may receive the full benefit of them, consider with yourselves what use you have made of them the past year — what benefit they have been of to you. The inquiry is a ſerious one, & to ~~which~~ it you ought to attend; for whatever you may do in other matters, you cannot ~~give up this~~ neglect this, without forfeiting the character of reaſonable men.

You know that you cannot always continue here. If you are Christians, you expect a judgment to come; It is one of the great articles of your religion. Are you prepared for it? Are you better prepared that you were the last Advent Sundays? If you are, bleſs God for his grace, & by prayer & a devout attendance on the means of grace in his Church, implore the continuance of it, that growing & increasing in all heavenly tempers, you may not be ashamed, ed, but may look up with joy in the day of the Lord.

If you are not better prepared than you were a year ago, What good reason have you to hope you shall be better prepared after another year is gone round? And what aſsurance have you that God will continue you another year in this life to make the trial? Death will come; & often does come very unexpectedly; &, in Gods appointed time, judgment will follow. This judgment we must undergo— its consequences we must abide, be they what they may.

When men have some great matter at iſsue, on which their future prosperity in this world depends, it is common to see them anxious about it, attentive to every circumstance, & careful to prepare every thing which can influence the event, in the best manner they can. It is right to do so. Things of importance should be treated as such, & not passed lightly & carelessly over. It is a matter of importance that I am now urging on you — of more importance than any thing this world can give. Crowns & scepters can be of no estimation when compared with it. Why then should you neglect it as a triffling, insignificant affair, of no consequence to you?

Far be it from me to recommend a sour, austere behaviour to Christian people. I know no person who has so good a reason, or so great a right to be cheerful as the man of piety & religion. But his cheerfulness cannot arise from his neglecting his spiritual concerns, but from being attentive to them.

There are two principal reasons why we should attend to the consideration of the general judgment. One is that it is eternal; the other is, that we can make no preparation for it but in this life.

That the iſsue of this judgment is ever to continue the ſcriptures affirm in many places. That we are to be judged only concerning the things done in the body, their declarations are equally plain. Thus situated, How ought we to act? Reason will say, that we ought carefully to provide for that judgment, by conducting ourselves in ſuch a manner in this world as to obtain the acquittal of our judge: And revelation not only enjoins the same prudent conduct on us, but it points out to us the road we are to take — how we are to demean ourselves that we may escape the condemnation of ~~our judge~~ God.

What then have we to do but to attend to the directions of divine revelation, & by honestly ly living in obedience to God, endeavour to obtain his approbation & favour? Was our case otherwise — were we to cease to be when we cease to breathe, reason would point out a different conduct to us. Our wisest course then would be to make as much of the world as we could, & enjoy all that the present life could give us, as we could expect no other.

But as this short life is preparitory to another which is never to end, & our state in that endless life will depend on our conduct here — on the tempers, dispositions & habits we form, & in which we die, common sense requires that we attend to our situation, & conduct ourselves so that our happiness in that never ending state may be secure. To act otherwise is foolish — more foolish than the prodigal, who squanders in his youth the patrimony that would have supported him through life in decency & credit. For whatever inconveniences he may bring on himself by his profuseness, death will in a short time relieve him from them all. But the judgement of God at the last day will fix our state, no more to be changed; & therefore it is called eternal judgment, because its decision is to continue forever. If we misapply that time, those abilities & opportunities which God puts into our hands, that we may acquire & grow up in the tempers & habits of holiness & virtue, & become prepared for happiness with him; & will, in opposition to our better knowledge, indulge ourselves in the enjoyments & tempers which he hath forbidden; & pursue that mode of life which he hath told us is contrary to his nature, & destructive to all happiness with him, we act a most inconsiderate

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& imprudent part: Our own reason & judgment must condemn us; much more will God: For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, & knoweth all things (1 Jo. III. 20)

How idle is it to put a matter of so great importance upon the chance of vague conjectures; flattering ourselves that the issue of that judgment may not be quite so bad as is sometimes represented — that God is too merciful to punish forever — that the sins of finite creatures cannot deserve punishment without end; with a number of other positions of the same lax & vague tendency.

Far be it from me to limit the goodness & mercy of God, or to set up my own blind reason to be the judge of what he can, or cannot do. We know nothing, & can know nothing in this matter but from God; & ought to submit our judg—

judgment to what he hath said. To his word I wish to call you, hoping that you will let fair reaſon & common ſense determine its meaning. He knows my heart, that I earnestly wish for the ſalvation of all men. But it not what ~~we~~ I or you wish, but what God hath said, that ought to be the guide of our faith & rule of our conduct.

And suppose the misery of the wicked in the next life is ſometime or other to have an end. We know not when that end will come. It may be a thousand years must first paſs; It may be ten thousand; It may be a million. And what man in his ſenses would run the risk of only a hundred years of misery if he could avoid it? So that on this ground nothing is to be gained by such a belief. It trusts every thing to conjecture, & has no foundation for any certain hope.

We know how hard it is to bear pain in this life. Is any one sure it will be less hard in the next? Why then trifle in a matter of such consequence? Here, in every malady we fly to the Physician, anxious to be releived from pain & restored to health & ease.

God hath described to us the wretchedness of the wicked by expressions which imply the utmost anguish & torment. And if we cannot here endure the ~~anguish~~ pain of an aching tooth, How shall we dwell with everlasting burnings (Is. XXXIII. 14) Say that this is a metaphorical expression: Yet it means something. It means at least that the misery of the wicked in the world to come, shall be analogous to, & as great as the consuming of the body by the material fire of this world.

Knowing the terrors of the Lord, I would fain persuade you to flee from the wrath to come. For God hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world by that man whom he hath ordained, Jesus Christ (Ac. XVII. 31) Before his tribunal we must all then appear, that we may receive the things done in the body, according to that we have done, whether it be good or bad (2 Cor. V. 10)

Seeing these things are so, What manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation & godlineſs? How diligent in our duty, that we may be found of our judge in peace, without spot & blameleſs?

I have not entered, in this discourse, into any detail of that particular conduct, which God requires of us that we may be accounted worthy to stand before the Son of man when he shall come to judge the earth. My view has been to comply with the design of the Church at this ſeason

son, & to preſs on you the certainty & awful consequences of the general judgment; that you may be induced to prepare for it by living as persons may reaſonably be supposed to live, who expect so solemn & tremendous a day of account.

That particular conduct which God hath directed for you, is declared in the holy ſcriptures. These are in the hands of every one of you. They are moreover redde constantly to you in the Church. So that, without your own very great fault, you cannot be ignorant of your duty. In the ſermons also which you have heard from this desk, the whole will of God concerning your Christian conduct, hath I trust been explained & made easy to your understandings. One thing let me recall to your minds before I conclude; namely, That the holy ſcriptures always represent a wicked life as ending in misery — a life of holineſs & virtue as terminating in happineſs. Righteousneſs, they say, tendeth to life; while he that purſueth evil, purſueth it to his own death (Prov. XI. 19) What that death is, may none of you ever know!

God give us grace to attend to the things that belong to our peace, that in the hour of death & in the day of judgment we may be acceptable in his ſight, & receive that bleſsing which his well beloved Son shall then pronounce to all that love & fear him, ſaying, Come ye bleſsed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. Amen.

Sermon the eighth.

The second Sunday in Advent, 1793.

The holy Scriptures.

Rom. XV. 4.

Whatsoever things were ~~aforetime~~ written aforetime, were written for our learning; that we through patience & comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

The Apostle had been endeavouring in the preceding chapter, to reconcile the Jewish & Gentile converts to Christianity, to mutual love & communion in the Christian Church. The Jews thought that the observation of the law of Moses was necessary for all those who received the Gospel, & insisted on their abstaining from those meats which the law forbad, & on their observing all the days which the law directed. The Gentiles thought this not only a great hardship but an unnecessary burden, as salvation through Christ crucified was to be obtained without it. They therefore insisted on their Christian liberty, to use all the creatures of God for food (consistently with the decision of the council of Jerusalem, to abstain from meats offered to idols, & from things strangled, & from blood,) without any regard to the law of Moses. Neither would they pay a regard to the days appointed to be observed by the law, but only to those set apart by the Christian Church.

On these points they seem to have differed so much as to have parted into seperate communions.

To compose this dispute St. Paul endeavours to persuade them to consider the necessary consequences of human infirmity, & to be willing to bear each others burdens. He advises the weak, that is, the uninformed Christian, not to condemn the liberties which the more knowing took, concerning days & meats commanded by the law. He directs the *strong*, thoſe who understood the principles of their religion, & the liberty from Moſaic rites & institutions which the Gospel gave them, not to despise & ſet at nought their weak brother, who ſuppoſed himſelf bound by the law, in matters relating to meats & days. But that they should mutually give way to prejudice in things not absolutely eſsential, & wait till time & better information had worn it off.

One argument used by the apostle to perſuade the strong, or well informed Christian not to use his liberty to ~~its~~ utmost extent, is, least he ſhould thereby tempt the weak & ignorant to do as he did, thinking, at the ſame time, that it was wrong & against the command of God: Because to do ſo would involve him in guilt, upon the principle that *whatsoever is not of faith is ſin*; That is, Whatsoever a man does, of the lawfulneſs of which he is not satisfied, or while he thinks it is not lawful for him to do it, to him it is ſin: Because in doing it he acts against his ſenſe of duty.

In the chapter of the text the Apostle purſues the ſame argument. *We that are strong, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, & not to pleaſe ourselves.* We who understand our Christian liberty & duty, ought to have patience with the ignorant, & not to dispise them because they understand not their freedom from Moſaic institutions as well as we do. We ought not to please ourselves in the use of this liberty, lest we offend our weak brother, cast a stumbling-block in his way, tempt him to renounce his Christianity, or encourage him by our example

ple to do what he thinks God hath forbidden.

Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification. Let us rather use our liberty so as not to offend our weak brother, but so as to confirm him in the principles & practice of his holy religion, in faith to God, in love to the brethren, & thereby retain him steadfast in the unity & communion of the Church.

For even Christ pleased not himself; but as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me. All Christians, the weak & the strong, the knowing & the ignorant, profess to follow the example of Christ. But Christ consulted not his own ease & pleasure. He regarded the glory of God & the good of men more than his own quiet. He bore our infirmities; he bore the reproaches & insults of men; he endured the cross, despising the shame, that glory might redound to God, & blessedness to man. Small therefore is the sacrifice we make, when we refrain from particular kinds of food before our weak brother, that, in imitation of Christ, we may do him good, & thereby bring glory to God.

Lest what David had said in the person of Christ, ſhould appear of but small import, on account of the length of time that had ſince paſsed, the apostle observes to them, that long ago as it was written, it was written for their instruction. *For*, saith he, not only this ſcripture, *The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me*, but *whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we through patience & comfort of the ſcriptures, might have hope* — might learn to bear the reproaches as well as infirmities of men, & by enduring them patiently & with resignation to the will of God, might reasonably hope to receive the reward which God hath, in that case promised to us.

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Though the text was written by St. Paul on the particular occasion which I have explained, yet it is expreſsed in ſuch general terms as ſhew it to be applicable to all times & circumstances. How ever long ago the ſcriptures were written, or on whatever particular occasion, still our instruction & benefit is one end they aim at.

In the Collect for the day, the Church hath called our attention to this ſubject. She therein puts us in mind, & makes it the request of our prayer to God, That as he hath caused all holy scriptures to be written for our learning, we may make that prudent, holy, & devout use of them, as to be brought by them to embrace, & ever to hold fast the bleſsed hope of everlasting life, which he hath given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ.

All scripture, saith the Apostle, *whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning*.

learning, & not merely for the information of thoſe in whoſe time they were written. Had that been the only intention of God, to have benefited that generation only, to have spoken to them by his prophets would have been sufficient. But he knew that his Church was to continue to the end of the world, & that the knowledge of his dispensations would always be neceſsary to its well-being. No sooner therefore had he established his Church under Moses, than he inspired him to write the history of the creation, & of his dealings with mankind from the beginning of the world.

Other holy men, who succeeded Moſes, have, under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, continued that history down to the transactions of the Apostles of Christ. So that from the beginning of the world to that period, we have such an account as we can depend on, of all the dealings of God with his Church, as is necessary to establish that faith in him & obedience to his will, which will prepare us for happiness with him in heaven. This knowledge of the scriptures is that learning which the Apostle means in the text— instruction in the things of God which lead to life eternal.

The authority of the scriptures is established, by prophecy, or the foretelling of future events, by miracles, or works above the power of natural causes, & which can be done only by the power of God, by the attestation of the writers, that they wrote only what God directed them to write— (an this attestation which was generally sealed with their blood,) & by the fulfilment of most of the prophecies which the holy books contain.

Particularly the redemption of the world by Jesus Christ, the eternal & adorable Son of God made man— his atonement for sin— the promise of forgiveneſs through repentance & faith in him, — reſurrection from death — the last judgment — eternal life to the faithful — the interceſsion of Christ in heaven — the gift & constant preſence of the Holy Ghost, to do that for us & in us, which we cannot do for ourſelves, are the principal points of Christian doctrine taught us in the scriptures.

Without the revelation of God none of these things could have come to our knowledge. Nature furnishes no means of instruction in these points. Great reason therefore have we to bleſs God that he hath cauſed all holy scriptures to be written for our learning; that he hath, by his own divine wisdom in the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, made them profitable for doctrine, to instruct us in the will of God, & teach us the true faith in him which he requires; for reproof, to point out to us, & expose ~~the~~ the fatal effect of error & vice both in opinion & practice; for *correction*, to reform & amend every thing amiſs in us, in principle & practice; for *instruction in righteousneſs*, or in the way of holineſs; that being perfect in the knowledge & practice of the will of God, we may obtain the enjoyment of him who is the fountain of happineſs to his creatures. Miſerable must have been our condition had not the goodneſs of God interpoſed for our relief — Blind with ignorance, lost in error, the slaves of evil passions, & lusts, & habits, we must have wandered on to perdition through the horrid road of wickedneſs & vice.

Bleſsed be his holy name, he left not man to perish. His goodneſs provided redemption for him. His Holy Spirit gradually made that redemption known to him, as his exigencies required, by his prophets & meſsengers; together with all the dispensations of his providence which led to it & explained its design. All this revelation of his will he caused to be written by the inspiration of the same Holy Spirit. His providence hath preserved, & brought these writings down to us. They are in the hands of every one of us; and in our hands, that we may diligently apply ourselves to the study of them, with minds disposed to learn & obey the will of God made known to us in them.

That this disposition may be the more effectual, let us frequently recollect what the Apostle hath said in the text, *Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we through patience & comfort of the scriptures, might have hope.*

The Greek word ὑπομονὴ, here translated patience ~~rather~~ more strictly signifies *support*, & rather expresses the foundation of the virtue of patience than its exercise. Patience supports us under the troubles of life, in quiet expectation of the fulfilment of Gods promises to us. But the scriptures give us more support than this. They contain those promises of God on which our faith, & hope, & patience are founded — particularly the promise of the gift of the Holy Spirit, the author & worker of faith, & hope, & patience, & of every thing in us that is good. They declare to us the reward of eternal life in heaven to be given to all the faithful servants of God at the day of judgment.

These are the principal articles of our religion which lay a foundation for our *hope* & support us in it; & these articles we learn from the holy scriptures. In the same way they administer comfort to us. They inform us of the love of God to us, of the gift of his Son for our redemption, of his atonement for our sins, & of all the other things which he did & still does for us.

They direct us to the true object of our worship & adoration — the Holy Trinity in Unity — Father, Son, &

& Holy Ghoſt, One God, bleſsed forever. They also direct us to worship this One God in spirit & in truth, & through the mediation of the One Son, Jesus Christ the Redeemer.

They inform us that God has established his Church in this world on the mediation of his Son, & hath called & commanded all men to come into it with faith in him, with repentance from all sin & wickedneſs, & in it to live faithfully according to thoſe laws & directions which he hath made known in the same holy scriptures, promising to those who do so a happy eternity in heaven.

They warn us to expect troubles, afflictions, persecutions, diſtreſses in this life, & direct us under them, & under all the weakneſses of nature, & evils of the world, to look to him for support, to make our supplications to him to be delivered from them, or for patience to bear them. These prayers, made through the mediation of his Son, they aſsure us he will regard & will bleſs us, & do that which is best for us.

This support, this comfort, the scriptures present unto us, & invite & urge us to accept of them. If we look at the miseries to which we are exposed, which we daily feel, which we ever dread, we shall at once see how much we need them. Of all other support & comfort we are destitute; of all other hopeleſs. The world disappoints us; afflictions aſsault us; nature fails us, & we drop into the grave, without any hope of rising to life again, but what divine revelation affords us.

All the difficulty & darkneſs which attend our present state, the holy books diſsipate & clear away. They are not only a light to our feet, & a lamp to our paths to direct us in the way of holineſs; they are a light also to our understandings, enabling us to comprehend, in some degree, the mysteries of divine providence, the intention of the dispensations of God to the children of men. They tell us that God does not willingly afflict or grieve the creatures of his hands — that the troubles & afflictions of life are designed to purify our nature from the defilements of evil lusts & passions & tempers; to teach us submission to God & dependence on him, that we may become capable of his blessing in eternity; that he therefore requires us to bear with patience & resignation to him, all the troubles of this life, whatever they may be, the infirmities of our own nature, the reproaches also & infirmities of others; and that he hath promised we shall receive the reward of all in his heavenly kingdom.

Well therefore hath the Church taught us to pray in the Collect for the day, that God, who hath caused all holy scriptures to be written for our learning, would grant to us that we may in such wise *hear* them, when redde to us by his minister in the Church, *read* them ourselves in our houses, *mark* their meaning, particularly what is more immediately applicable to our own state & circumstances, *learn* from them the principles of our religion & the measure of our duty, & *inwardly digest them*, by applying what we hear, & read, & mark, & learn to our own hearts & consciences; so ~~that~~ they may strengthen our faith, point out the errors, & correct the evil practices of our lives; instruct, guard, & advance us in all the ways of piety & holiness, in all the good works of benevolence & mercy; that holding fast the blessed hope of eternal life to the end, we may obtain the full possession of it, through Jesus Christ.

The example of holy David strongly recommends the study of the scripture to us. The hundred & nineteenth Psalm is wholly employed in celebrating the excellency of Gods word, in declaring the pleasure he took in studying it, the benefit he found from meditating on it. The bare reading of that divine composition is enough to inflame every heart with the same desire of heavenly knowledge, & to turn it to the same source & means of obtaining it.

Highly to the commendation of Timothy is what St. Paul saith of him — that *from a child he had known the holy ſcriptures*. His sentiments of the scriptures are also strongly expreſsed, when he said of them that they were able to make him wise unto ſalvation, through faith which is in Jesus Christ. Early therefore Timothy began the study of that wisdom which leadeth to salvation. For it he sought in the holy scriptures, where the God of wisdom had recorded it. His study was blest with a most happy iſsue. It led him to that wisdom which he sought. It prepared, & opened his heart to the preaching of St. Paul,

& he became, by Gods grace, an eminent convert to the religion of Jesus. It led him to mortify all carnal & corrupt affections, & rendered him a worthy governor & bishop of the Church of Ephesus; & finally it conducted him, through the road of martyrdom to heavenly glory.

Be it our care to follow these, & all the other faithful servants of God in the way to heavenly happineſs. It hath succeeded with them; it will also ſucceed with us. And to our study of the Book of God, let us add our fervent & constant prayers to him, that he would enlighten our understandings, & dispose our hearts to perceive & know what things we ought to believe & do, & give us grace & power faithfully to fulfil the same.

To our prayers we must add our best endeavours to comply fully with the motions of the Holy Spirit, exciting us to believe & do thoſe things which the scriptures point out to us to be believed ed & done. Let us also endeavour to keep our hearts humble under the sense of our infirmities, & in constant dependence on God for help & salvation through Christ. Then will God bleſs us also with his Holy Spirit, his divine wisdom, with his favour & protection, & conduct us through holineſs to everlasting life.

Sermon the ninth.

The ſecond Sunday in Advent, 1793.

The conduct of the Bereans considered.

Acts XVII. 11.

These were more noble than thoſe of Theſsalonica, in that they received the word with all readineſs of mind, & ſearched the scriptures daily, whether thoſe things were so.

The context informs us that Paul & Silas, as they traveled the country, to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles, came to the city Theſsalonica. Finding there a ſynagogue, Paul according to his uſual custom of offering the Gospel first to the Jews, & to do it openly in their synagogue, went in unto them, & three sabbath-days reasoned with them out of the scriptures, opening & alledging that Christ must needs have suffered, & risen again from the dead; And that this Jesus *whom, said he, I preach unto you is Christ.*

Some of them attended to the preaching & reasoning of Paul, & believing, associated themselves with him & Silas. Many also of the Greek proselytes to the Jews religion did the same. But the generality of the Jews in that city were offended at what Paul had said about their law, & respecting Jesus, whom their rulers at Jerusalem had caused to be put to death. Instead of believing they were moved with envy & malice at them, & at those who had joined them. They therefore gathered a company of worthless people, set the city in an uproar, & assaulted the house of Jason, where Paul & Silas lodged, with an intention to bring them out to the mob, to be treated as they pleased.

Not finding them, they ill-used Jason, & dragged him & some Christian brethren before the magistrates;

gestrates; wickedly accusing Paul of sedition; alledging that he was setting up one Jesus as king in opposition to Cesar.

However displeased the magestrates might be with this tumultuous proceedure, they forgot neither their moderation nor their duty. They took security of Jason & of the others & let them go.

The disciples foreseeing this uproar, or else in the very beginning of it, sent away Paul & Silas by night to Berea a city in their neighbourhood. Being come thither, they went into the Jews synagogue, & undismayed at what had happened at Theſsalonica, preached Christ to them. *These*, saith the text, *were more noble than those in Theſsalonica, in that they received the word with all readineſs of mind, & searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.*

The phrase, *were more noble*, though literally it only prefers the conduct of the Jews of Berea to that of the Jews of Theſsalonica, yet in truth, & according to the idiom of language, it expreſses disapprobation & censure of the latter, a high encomium & approbation of the former.

That this distinction is just, a comparison of their conduct will clearly shew. They of Theſsalonica acted meanly, for they acted from envy. What could be meaner than to get together a company of the baser people, & attempt by violence to put a stop to the preaching of of the Gospel? what baser than to ill-use a quiet man, whoſe only crime ſeems to have been, that he entertained Paul & Silas in his house? The Bereans, on the other hand, acted more nobly, because they heard Paul preach with candour & attention; becaus too they examined what he said with care, & by the holy scriptures.

These two particulars make up that nobleness of mind for which the Bereans are commended. Let us then examine them more particularly, & see whether some instruction, useful in the Christian life, will not arise to us from their example.

1. The text asserts that the Jews of Berea were more noble than those of Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind.

All men need instruction, & it is certainly a mark of a noble mind to attend to it when offered, especially on points of importance; & such was the subject on which Paul preached — it concerned their acceptance with their maker, the fountain of all blessedness.

They knew that they were sinful men, in need of the favour & forgiveness of God. The news of a Saviour who died for their sins, to reconcile God to them, & procure eternal life for them, was highly grateful to them. This Paul preached;

preached to them, & they willingly heard him on the subject, resolved, if what he said on ~~the subject~~ it were reasonable, to receive it.

Besides; they were Jews, in covenant, as they supposed with God, who had revealed himself to their fathers, & had given them many promises of a deliverer & Saviour, at some time to appear among them. According to their prophets, the time of his appearance was full come, & they were in earnest expectation of him.

The particular subject of Pauls preaching at Berea is not mentioned. The context naturally leads us to suppose it was the same on which he had preached at Theſsalonica. He therefore declared that the Saviour, Meſsiah, whom they had expected, was already come, & had done & suffered all that the prophets had foretold of him; And that Jesus whom their rulers at Jerusalem had delivered up to death, was Christ whom God had promiſed.

To establish these points it became neceſſary for him to open & apply the prophecies of the ſcriptures. This would lead him to mention the the number & nature of the miracles which Jesus wrought, making the *blind* to ſee, the *deaf* to hear, the *lame* to *leap as an hart*, *the tongue of the dumb to ſing*, & the dead to return again to life (Is. XXXV. 5, 6) — the death which he had died, being *numbered with the tranſgreſſors* (Is LIII. 12) — his resurrection from the dead on the third day, before his body had *ſeen corruption* (Pſ. XVI. 10) — his aſcension into heaven, when he *led captivity captive*, & received gifts for men, even for his enemies, that the Lord God might dwell among them (Pſ. LXVIII. 18) These events, taken together, prove Jesus to be Christ, King Mesſiah whom God had ſet upon the holy hill of Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem (Ps. II. 6)

Through this Jesus the Apostles preached the remiſsion of ſins, the gift of the Holy Ghost & everlasting life after death to the faithful. These doctrines, no doubt St. Paul, at this time declared & explained to the Bereans; they naturally rose from his ſubject. They were indeed the great bleſsings of the Gospel, & easily ſupported from the old prophets (Jo. II. 28, 32 — Is. XXVI. 19)

How must the hearts of the Bereans have burned at hearing this declaration, that their Meſsiah, the hope of their nation was come, & that bleſsings far greater than any they had looked for, were to be obtained through him.

Here another instance of their noble & generous mind opens to us. Their countrymen had so far mistaken the character of Meſsiah as to look for a temporal deliverer in him. A potent & victorious King, who should deliver them from subjection to the Romans, reduce all the neighbouring nations under their dominion, & establish them in independence & empire, could not but open a pleasing prospect to a people who had lived so long under the controul of others. This notion the Jews had formed of Meſsiah, & under its prejudice, had rejected Jesus, & conspired his death, & had persecuted & distreſsed his followers.

From this prejudice the Bereans had kept themselves clear, at least so far as to make no objections to the receiving of Meſsiah as the dispenser of those spiritual bleſsings which the apostle declared in his name. However they may have valued the advantages of empire & dominion over others, they prefered the bleſsings of Gods favour & Holy Spirit,

rit, remiſsion of sins & eternal life in heaven before them. One difficulty remained; that was to aſcertain the truth of what the Apostle had said. This difficulty they managed with propriety, & in the same noble way they conducted themselves in attending to the things which were spoken by Paul. For,

II. The text aſserts that the Jews of Berea were more noble than those of Theſsalonica, in that they not only received the word preached by Paul, with all readineſs of mind, but searched the scriptures daily, whether thoſe things were so.

They had in their hands a revelation of God's will, of undoubted authenticity; which forbad them to receive any thing as coming from God which was contrary to it or inconsistent with it. This revelation contained many promises of Meſsiah whom they expected, — many characters & circumstances of his life by which he was to be known when he appeared. They did not immediately surrender up their judgments & faith to the apostle. They acted more reasonably as well as nobly. They were determined to examine & judge for themselves in a matter in which they were so deeply interested, & whose consequences were so very extensive.

St. Paul had appealed to their holy books — to that revelation of Gods will which they had in their possession. From it he had supported the doctrines he had preached. Those books were, if they acted reasonably, to determine the point, whether He were the Messiah whom Paul preached to them. In those books were marks & rules by which to judge of this matter — To those books, — to those marks & rules they applied. They searched the scriptures, to see whether ~~those~~ things which Paul asserted were so? whether he had fairly cited & consistently explained the prophecies concerning Messiah? whether the inferences from his doctrine, remission of sins, the gift of the Holy Ghost, & everlasting life were fairly drawn?

Nor were they content with a single examination. They searched the scriptures daily. as often at least as they heard Paul preach, they examined his ſermon by their holy books, whether those things were really so. At length finding them agreable to their scriptures,— corresponding to the marks & characters of Messiah which God had given, they hesitated not to receive Jesus for Messiah— their Saviour— whom Paul had declared unto them.

Several inferences useful to us in the Christian life may I apprehend be drawn from what hath been said on this subject. And,

1. Let me recommend to you the attention & candor of these noble-minded Bereans.

They shewed their attention in willingly hearing what St. Paul had to say on a subject which appeared of importance to them. Their candour in keeping themselves free from the prejudices of their countrymen, especially from the prejudice relating to the temporal nature of Christ's kingdom.

The subject of the Gospel is of as much importance to us as it was to them, its blessings as great, its threats as severe. We have therefore as much need to attend to it as they had. To do so we have frequent opportunities: And if we have not St. Paul to preach to us, with all the charmes of human & divine eloquence, we can apply to his writings for instruction in faith & holineſs.

Nor are the ministers whom God hath set to serve him in his Church deficient in the necessary qualifications of able preachers of the word of God. It must therefor be extremely our own fault if we are inattentive to the things which belong to our peace; And if we attend not to them they cannot be of service to us. The minister may preach but if we hear not, no good can come to us from it.

2. The want of attention is not the only bar to receiving the bleſsings of the Gospel. Prejudice will produce the same mischief. Our prejudices may be different from those which hardened the hearts of the Jews against the Gospel; But if they are as great, & produce the same effect,

fect, candour will be as neceſsary for us as it was for them; as noble in us as it was in the Bereans.

The general sources of prejudice in religion are, the love of the world, education, vicious habits, & pride, or a high opinion of our own abilities & excellency. Against these therefore it is our duty particularly to guard ourselves, that they blind not the mind, nor harden the heart against the truth. To what purpose is it to hear the truth, be the subject ever so important, if prejudice, & paſsion, & worldly lusts, & pride unite against it, & like the company of lewd fellows of the baser sort at Theſsalonica, drive it away?

To Berea the Apostle retired when driven from Theſsalonica. To the example of the Bereans let us go, & learn of them to divest ourselves of all prejudice against the holy doctrines of Christianity, to hear its principles taught with candour, to judge of its truth with impartiality. Then shall we open both our ears & our hearts to its heavenly precepts, embrace Messiah, Christ, as our Saviour from sin & death, our deliverer from the wrath of God, from the sting of guilt, from the power of wicked lusts, & passions, & habits, & from eternal damnation.

3. The regard which the Bereans paid to their own judgment deserves our respect, & is worthy of our imitation.

However they were pleased with St. Pauls eloquence & masterly reasoning, they did not surrender their judgments up to him. They took time for attentive deliberation — they compared what he had said with their holy books, & thence judged of the truth of what he taught.

This practice I would particularly recommend

mend to you. God & your own reason require this conduct of you. The revelation of God is in your hands. It is now complete, containing every thing neceſsary to salvation. It directs you to try the spirits — to try every thing you hear preached, by the word of God, & see whether it comes from him — to *prove all things* by the same rule, & to *hold fast* only *that which is good.*

Some caution is however neceſsary, lest we pervert the scripture & wrest it to our own destruction. A great part of it indeed, & especially that part which relates to our practice, is plain, & open to common capacities. If men err here, it is their own fault. It shews that some lust, or passion, or interest hath beguiled them: And unleſs they will break loose from it, I see not what good can be done to them.

Other parts of scripture are not easily intelligible; at least they require more knowledge & discernment than generally accompany an uncultivated understanding. And probably those prophecies which are yet unfulfilled, will elude the penetration even of the learned, till the events to which they relate shall happen & open their meaning.

It cannot be the duty of any one to understand that which is above his capacity. Prudence as well as duty will direct him to turn his attention from such matters to those parts of scripture which he can understand, & which concern his practice. These are abundantly sufficient to guide the pious Christian in all the ways of holiness, & if he attend to them, will keep him in the sure road to everlasting life.

If ever honesty & candor be necessary to the Christian, they are necessary in examining into the meaning of those parts of scripture which are above the level of common capacities. Prejudice & prepossession will cloud his understanding & pervert his judgment. Nothing but the love of truth, & a deference for the authority of divine revelation, can secure him against that worst of all errors, the warping & bending of the scriptures, to make them comport with particular opinions, to which we have a strong attachment from education, or habit, or because we find them conducive to our interest or honour in the world, or to some wayward disposition of our own heart.

Perhaps this temper prevails more in the misinterpretation & misapplication of the scriptures than any other. We live in a country where professions of regard to the bible are very high; but where attention to its meaning, & obedience to its authority, are but moderate. Educated in different professions of Chrisitanity, people put different constructions on the scriptures, according to the different principles which they have been taught. They look not so much for the meaning of the Bible as for something which, at least in sound, will support the party of Christians to which they belong. With this party their interest is connected, & they hope to rise to wealth, & dignity in the State, through its influence. Their attachment to their interest or grandure is to great for their religion to overcome: And while countenance to their party can be obtained from torturing the Bible to speak their language, they give themselves no trouble about any further meaning.

Or perhaps wealth & power in the state are out of the question; and the desire of being at the head of some religious denomination inflames their ambition. The same thing will here happen. The scriptures will be perverted. New meanings will be put to old expressions. Particular texts will be so construed as to make them run counter to the general scope of divine revelation; And whatever else may happen, the lust of party & of eminence in it must not be given up. For unhappily, people who set out on a new scheme of religion, or embrace an old one for the sake of eminency in it, make their scheme the whole of religion. The Gospel consists of nothing else. They preach nothing as necessary to salvation, they speak of nothing but the peculiarities of their party. Where these are received all is right; where these are rejected all is wrong.

Sometimes people project new schemes in religion, or at least embrace them, to get rid of that self-denial & holy life which the Gospel requires. They commonly magnify the mercy of God; & provided they can shew ~~that~~ it to be infinite, they care not what becomes of his justice & truth.

There are others who seem to study the scriptures, only that they may appear to talk learnedly about religion. They can quote scripture, text after text, like a string of old proverbs; but without any regard to ſense, meaning, or application. To themselves they seem to appear, & to wish to appear to others wondrously religious, & to think that all religion consists in controversy, in ſettling points of faith & nice distinctions in divinity, & are therefore ever ready to dispute; but look at their lives & they are very different from what Christianity requires.

These are the common sourſes of the misinterpretation & misapplication of the holy scriptures, & against them we ought particularly to guard ourselves in the study of them. I have mentioned them in a short manner, but I hope sufficiently to caution you against them.

One general remark shall now close the subject; which is this. Whoever studies the scriptures for any other reason than that he may understand them, & learn the will of God from them, studies them for a bad purpose, & will most surely pervert them. Party views will warp his judgment; the desire of wealth will beguile him, the lust of power will corrupt him, the ambition of being eminent in some religious denomination will puff him up with pride, the desire of getting free from the obligations of holiness will plunge him in fleshly lusts, & sink his soul in perdition.

To the desire of knowing the will of God, must therefore be added a hearty & strong desire ~~of doing~~ of doing it. Then will the study of the scriptures make us wise unto salvation, through faith that is in Christ Jesus. In every situation of life we shall find its words a light to our feet, & a lamp to our paths — a sure guide in all difficulties, a support under all temptations, a comfort in all dangers. Beg therefor of God, by constant & earnest prayer to him, his most Holy Spirit, that you may in such wise hear, read, mark, learn, & inwardly digest his holy word, that you may embrace, & ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which he hath given you in our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sermon the tenth.

Liberality to the Poor; the 4th Sunday in Advent, 1798, preparatory to a collection which is annually made on Christmas-day, in St. James' Church in New London, for the relief of the Poor of the congregation.

Luke III. 11.

He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; & he that hath meat, let him do likewise.

These are the words of the holy Baptist, who was sent to prepare the way for Christ, & dispose the people to receive him. This duty he discharged by preaching repentance to them, & calling them to amendment of life; that they might be, in some sense, worthy to receive the Son of God, the Redeemer of the world; & disposed to embrace his doctrines of holiness & selfdenial, when his divine

vine mouth should be opened to dispense them.

Alarming to the inhabitants of Judea was the appearance of the holy hermit. He had issued from his retirement in the desert, clothed in rough attire, practising the most rigid mortification in his diet, & calling all men to repentance & amendment of life — declaring the speedy approach of God, with the woodmans ax in his hand, to fell every unfruitful tree — with the winnowing fan of the farmer, to seperate the chaff of the threshing-floor from the wheat — to consign the worthless trees & the chaff to the fire, & appropriating the trees bringing forth good fruit, & the wheat of the floor to their owner's use.

Prepare ye the way of the Lord, said the holy preacher, *make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, every mountain shall be brought low. The crooked* ways *shall be made straight* for him, *the rough ways*

ways shall be made smooth; And all flesh shall see the salvation of God — Who would not have been roused by such a preacher? who would not tremble at such a declaration? ~~& from such a man~~?

Apprehensive of what was to happen, Jerusalem & all Judea, & all the region round about Jordan, went out to him, & were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins (Matt. III. 5, 6)

O generation of vipers, cried he to the Scribes & Pharisees who came to be baptized of him, Who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore worthy fruits of repentance. —'Trust not to your descent from Abraham the 'friend of God — trust not merely to this confession of 'sins which ye have now ~~made~~, nor to this baptism of repentance which ye have now received; 'But let your future lives be according to them — '— abounding in all the works proper to the profession you have now taken on you. Bring down therefore every high look & proud thought, raise every humble, penitent heart, in expectation of the salvation of God— Amend your crooked ways, & make straight the path of your feet, according to his commandments, & be ready to receive your Saviour when he shall appear among you, as the *refiners fire*, *& like the fullers soap, to purify the sons of Levi*, & take away the iniquity of Jacob.-

Still anxious for the consequences of a wicked life, & perceiving there was something more expected of them than mere confession of sin & the baptism of repentance, the multitude earnestly demanded of him, *What shall we do then*? What particular course of life shall we pursue to escape that impending retribution of God, which our sins deserve? how conduct ourselves,

selves, that we may see & be blest with the salvation of God?

The Baptists answer (in addition to the profession of penitence which they had made by confessing their sins & submitting to his baptism) was, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; And he that hath meat let him do likewise.

In these words the most extensive liberality & beneficence to the poor & indigent are commanded. To restrain them literally to the giving an old superfluous coat, or meat which we cannot use, to the poor, would be inconsistent with common sense; yet I wish that, even in this literal sense, the direction was more exactly obeyed.

Raiment & food being those articles in which the poor more immediately suffer, the precept to relieve their necessities is delivered in terms more applicable to them. But the spirit of the precept extends to every thing our poor brother wants for his ſubsistence, & which we can spare.

The object of this precept is the relief of the poor, suffering under the want of the neceſsaries of life. Whatever therefore the poor man wants & we can supply, without reducing ourselves to the same neceſsity with that from which we relieve him, it is our duty to give. If he wants a coat, & we have two, the precept obliges us to guard him from the inclemency of the cold. If he is hungry & hath not wherewithall to satisfy his hunger, duty obliges us to give meat to him, if we have more than will satisfy our present neceſsities. Understand the rule according to its meaning & spirit, & it will oblige us to relieve & aſsist him with every thing neceſsary to his life, & health, & comfort, which it is in our power to do for him conſistently with our life & health, & comfort.

This duty is supposed to flow from our love to men, as they are the creatures of God, & the servants of Christ. The measure of it is the love of Christ to us. Now Christ loved us when we were unworthy of his love. Unworthineſs in the object is therefore no bar to the operation of this precept. Besides, we had brought our unworthineſs on ourselves, by our ſin & disobedience to God. A persons bringing his neceſsity on himself by his vices, & immoralities, & careleſsneſs, will not therefor take off the obligations we are under to relieve him.

Not only were we unworthy of the goodneſs & mercy of God when he first shewed goodneſs & mercy to us through Christ, but we have continued our unworthineſs ever since, by doing those things he hath forbidden, & neglecting the things he hath commanded. Though therefore we foresee, that they whom we relieve will behave ill, & make an ill use of our liberality, it will not abate the force of the duty that is on us to relieve them when it is in our power to do so.

Essential to our holy religion must that duty be, the preaching of which was to prepare the way of Christ among men. His advent to redeem the world, was the greatest instance of liberality & mercy that was ever shewn. It could not therefore be strange, that his forerunner, who knew that the end of his coming was to open the way for the peace of God to visit the earth, & to promote good-will among men, should direct them to the offices of liberality & mercy, as the most proper method of shewing their penitence towards God, & their ready disposition to receive him, whose mediation & atonement were to restore them to the peace & love of God, & to restore

store peace & love among men.

That Christ himself taught the same doctrine of liberality to the necessitous which his harbinger had taught, you will readily confess when you recollect the pathetic sentence from his divine lips which said, *Sell that ye have, & give alms; provide yourselves bags that wax not old, a treasure in the heavens which faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth* (Lu. XII. 33)

The holy Apostles of Christ followed his example in this matter, & enjoined the duty of liberality to the poor, in terms too strong not to make a deep impression on us all. It is not necessary that I should quote many of them to you. Hear however the direction which St. Paul gives on this subject to Timothy the Bishop of Ephesus; *Charge them that are rich*

rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy: That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; Laying up in store for themselves, a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life (1 Tim. VI. 17 &c)

Good works in the language of the scriptures are the works of benevolence, & mercy, & liberality—works which do good to others. This being remembred, it will appear that works of mercy & liberality to the poor, are the true & best fruits of penitence towards God. A great part of the crimes which are noted by God against men, are those which they commit against each other, by fraud, theft, injustice, oppression. If we ever come to true repentance for our sins, the first wish of the soul will be to make restitution of all ill-gotten wealth. This cannot always be done; & the only way left to ease the soul of its burden, is to distribute, what with a good conscience cannot be kept, in relief to the necessitous, whom Gods providence hath left destitute of food & raiment.

That there is some connection between penitence & works of mercy, appears from the advice of Daniel to Nebuchadnezzer, Break off thy sins by righteousness – cease from thy oppression & do justice – & thy iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor – compensate for thy injustice to them by thy liberality in alms-deeds (Dan. IV. 27)

When the heart is softened by compunction, & made tender by the consideration of the love &

mercy of God to us, How is it possible ~~it~~ they should not warm us with love & benevolence to others? especially to those who are suffering with poverty & indigence, with cold & sickness, & possibly with many more distresses — distresses from which it is impossible they should relieve themselves, or get through them any other way than by the helping hand of charity.

Nor is liberality to the poor a proper exercise of our penitence only at the beginning of a new & holy life. The sense of his former sins will frequently return upon the memory of the good man, & call forth the softest emotions of gratitude to God for his goodness in forgiving them. Can it fail to call forth his sympathy & love to the poor partners of mortality, suffering the penalty of sin, under all the pressures of poverty? especially when he considers that it is owing to the free, undeserved love of God, that he himself is in more prosperous circumstances? And possibly in more prosperous circumstances for this very reason, that he may smooth his own road to heaven, by exercising a humane & benevolent disposition towards the poor — lightening their burden & comforting them in their distresses.

The vicissitude of temporal things in the midst of which we live is a reason why we should keep this duty fresh in our minds, & our hands always exercised in the practice of it. Many, who are now obliged to look to the liberality of others for support, were once able to support themselves, if not in oppulence, yet with comfort & decency. They will now enjoy the sweetest moments from the recollection of their former beneficence; or if they were hard-hearted & niggardly, their bitterest pangs will spring from that source.

What hath been their fortune, may be ours also. The sharpest foresight, the most prudent care, the best management cannot always ward off the adverse strokes to which worldly prosperity is exposed. Happy for us if we can always keep the heart from sinking under them.

Our only support is in God. He alone can help us, & keep us from evil. He alone can give & secure to us the blessings of time or eternity. Prudence therefore requires us to make him our friend & protector. The most effectual way to do that, is to *consider the poor & needy*, for he hath declared those who do so, to be blessed; & hath said, *The Lord shall deliver them in the time of trouble* (Ps. XLI. 1) He hath also said, *He that hath pity on the poor, lendeth unto the*

the Lord; & that which he hath given, will he pay him again (Prov. XIX.17)

Your ready disposition to the exercise of this most eminent grace hath appeared in your free & voluntary desire of having the alms of the congregation collected on Christmas day, for the relief of the poor members of it. The plan was well judged on several accounts, & I trust, hath been attended with considerable benefit to those who needed relief.

1. The particular season of the year calls on the humane & benevolent to extend the help of their liberality to the necessitous. The winter doubles all the distresses of poverty; & greatly enhances the value of that relief, which at any time of the year would be a blessing. The literal sense of the text,

can never be more seasonably regarded than now, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none, to guard his shivering limbs from the piercing cold; & he that hath meat, let him do likewise, that the empty stomach may not add keenness to the winter blast.

2. Christmas should, of all seasons, enlarge the liberality of our dispositions, & give greater warmth to our charity. At that season God most signally displayed his unmeritted love to us miserable creatures, destitute, & in want of every thing that is good. His love sent his Son to redeem us; & as on that day he was born in our nature, to accomplish the mighty work. He left the throne of his glory, & humbled himself in poverty & distress, that he might rescue us

from ruin & exalt us to everlasting life. ~~the throne of his glory.~~

Ought we not then, in imitation of his goodness, to part with a little portion of our worldly wealth, to relieve those from distress, for whom he died as well as for us? And ought not the season in which we celebrate the mystery of so great a blessing as the nativity of Christ, warm our hearts with love unfeigned to the poor & needy, & enlarge our liberality ~~to them~~? to them?

3. The collection of the alms of the congregation will concentrate the efforts of every one, & like many rivulets united in one stream, carry that advantage & refreshment with it, which could not be obtained by seperate exertions.

I doubt not, therefore, that you will all remember the poor on Christmas day; and as God hath blest your store the year past, that you will be bountiful to them, as he hath been bountiful to you. So shall the prayers of the poor recommend you to God, & he shall repay what you give — a full reward in his heavenly kingdom, where all his faithful servants rich & poor shall meet together, & rejoice forever in the glory of God. So be it heavenly Father, for Jesus Christs sake our Lord & Saviour. Amen.

Nine Sermons

by

Samuel Seabury. D. D.

Bishop of Connecticut & Rhode Island.

Being Vol. 2.

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VIII. Ashwednesday, Repentance. 157—182

Joel II. 12. Turn ye even to me, saith the Lord, with all your heart, &c:

IX. The certainty of the general judgment. 183—219

Acts XVII. 30, 31. And the times of this ignorance God winked at &c:

London, Augt. 21. 1786.
——— 24 Δ / 88

Setauket ~~[illegible]~~ 1817
Islip Δ 0 – 2
1821

Sermon ~~1. Both~~

Psalm **XXVII.** v16. Old verſion.

O tarry thou the LORDS leisure; be strong, and he shall comfort thine heart, and put thou thy trust in the LORD.

To a considerate mind nothing can appear more reaſonable than the duty enjoined in the text. That, weak & helpleſs as we are of ourselves, we should trust in the power & strength of our almighty Creator, is the dictate of nature. — Blindneſs & folly belong to man. He is perpetually running into errors & mistakes. He chooſes wrong, or he uses wrong means to accompliſh a well-choſen end. Accidents often baffle his best-concerted plans, or render ineffectual his well-directed endeavours. The power of open enemies, the treachery of pretended friends, the inattention, or inability of real ones, often render abortive those meaſures which his wisdom — ſometimes, poſsibly, his vanity — had represented to his imagination as altogether infallible. His own interest, then, as well as duty, requires that he should trust to that wisdom & foresight that cannot fail — that he ſhould refer himself to to that providence & exact judgment which, being infinite & perfect, can neither err nor be foiled — that he ſhould depend on that power which none can resist — & commit himſelf to that care & attention which nothing can escape.

All the arguments which either reaſon or revelation furnish in behalf of the providence of GOD, are real & ſtrong arguments why we should fix our hope, & confidence in him. For, did GOD create the world, & ſhall he not watch over & preserve it? Does he watch over & preserve the world, and shall we not trust in, & depend upon his watchfulneſs & care? Does he regulate & govern the inanimate part of the creation, & ſhall thoſe creatures who have life & ſenſe be neglected? Does he provide for the irrational, the brute animals, & ſhall his reaſonable creatures escape his notice? — they whom he made in his own image, & endowed with imortal ſpirits, — heirs of his own immortality — capable of eternal glory — objects of his love — ſhall they be excluded from his providential care? — ſhall they be overlooked & forgotten by that paternal goodneſs which nothing can limit or confine? Or ſhall GOD continually exercise ſuch care & love toward man, & man not be engaged to place his love & hope & trust on the power & wisdom & goodneſs of his heavenly father? forbid it gratitude, & every generous sentiment!

Does GOD provide for the lion & the eagle? — does he feed the diminutive sparrow, & clothe the lilly

&

& the graſs? And wilt thou foolish man, distrust his providence, & become peevishly anxious for food & raiment? Or wilt thou receive continual ſupport from the hand of the Almighty, & not be led to place thy trust & confidence in him?

It is a common observation that men are apt, in their prosperity to forget GOD. And, indeed, when ſucceſs crowns ~~all~~ our schemes ~~and~~ our wealth, or our buſineſs ſupplies ~~all~~ our wants, we are too little diſpoſed to look up to him, from whoſe bountiful hand we, in truth, receive all that we enjoy. But yet the prosperous man is generally very ready to own the providential care of almighty GOD. While no accidents croſs his meaſures, to him all is calm & ſunshine — nature smiles, & every object wears the garb of delight. That GOD governs the world he willingly owns, & readily admits that his tender mercies are over all his works. But what would be his ſentiments ſhould adversity present her hideous form to his view, & stalk forth to meet him with ruin, distress & poverty in her train, or armed with diseases, pain & anguish? Unless his heart be well guarded by religious principles, he would be in great danger of denying the providence of GOD, or of murmuring at it. The whole oeconomy of GODs government would appear distorted, & out of place. He would be apt to think himself the particular object of divine displeasure, & would be ready to ask, What have I done that the vengeance of GOD should be levelled at my head? Mistaken man! Afflictions are as truly the merciful dispensations of GOD, as prosperity itself, & as often the effects of his love & goodness.

No man ever experienced more of the vicissitudes of human life than the author of the text. And no man ever had more, or stronger temptations to renounce his hope & trust in GOD than he had. His integrity, however, he preserved to the last, & ever remembered that GOD was his hope & strength, a very present help in trouble.

Let us take a short view of his history, & we shall be convinced that a firm trust in the power & goodness of Almighty GOD was the leading principle of his whole life, & strongly marked his character, through all that variety of occurrencies in wch he was engaged, from early youth to old age. We shall also be convinced that the advice of the text is not a cursory remark, or common-place matter of opinion, but drawn from fact, & real observation; & that his own experience made him leave this admonition upon record for the use of others — *O tarry thou the LORDS leisure; be strong* &c:

We first find him in the quality of a shepherd tending his fathers sheep in the wilderness: And full of that courage which arises from a sense of duty, & a strong hope of the protection of GOD, defending them from the lion & bear which came to prey upon them. The same courage accompanied him to the camp, & excited him to encounter, & enabled him to ~~over~~come the giant who defied the army of Israel — GOD, said he, who delivered me out of the paw of the lion & the bear, shall deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. + (See page 21)

Falling afterward under the jealousy & reſentment of Saul, he was driven from his home, from his friends, & connections, & forced to seek his safety in flight, & his security in the forests & caverns of the earth. Under all the persecution which the malice of his enemy ~~inflicted~~ brought on him, trust & confidence in the care & protection of GOD was his firm & neverfailing support. To him he refered all his concerns, & on him he relied for safety & deliverence. And he did deliver him, in a way honourable to him, & which opened a door for his advancement to the throne of his persecutor. Thereby rewarding him, as well in the manner as in the event, for that steadfast ~~trust~~ he had placed in the divine goodness.

+ One instance more of the entire reliance of this eminent personage on the protection of GOD will be sufficient for my purpose; & it shall be taken from his conduct in the unnatural rebellion that his own son raised against him, & in which almost his whole kingdom concurred, notwithstanding the princely care he had ever taken of it — defending it by his courage & skill in war, & improving it by his wisdom & prudence in peace. Driven from his capitol, & obliged to save himself by sudden flight — when all appearances of safety were cut off, & no human probability remained of his ever again recovering his kingdom, his faith & trust in GOD supported him under the tryal, & kept alive his hope of a happy restoration, not so much to his kingdom as to the privilege of worshipping GOD in his Sanctuary — *If I find favor*, said he, *in the eyes of the LORD, he will bring me again, & shew me his Ark, & his Habitation*. ‡ (2 Sam. XV. 25)

The design of Almighty GOD, in having the lives, or principal actions of men of eminent piety & virtue recorded, & transmitted to posterity, is certainly to do good to succeeding generations. By instances of virtue to excite others to the practice of it; & by exhibiting to our view scenes of human life, in which the power & goodness of God remarkably interposed, for the preservation or deliverance of his faithful servants, to inspire ~~all~~ men in every age with firm trust & reliance upon their heavenly Father— That being weaned from impatience & pride, & preserved in that virtue & propriety of conduct which the laws of God prescribe, & his providence is intended to promote, they may, by its various dispensations, be trained up in humble patient submission to the divine will, & thereby qualified for a happy deliverance from all their troubles, & for that reward which infinite goodness has provided for its faithful & approved servants in the next life.

It may be thought that examples & arguments drawn from such characters as Davids, are better accomodated to public calamities, & more proper to be urged to persons in great authority — to kings, & potentates, & governors, & rulers. But in truth public calamities & private afflictions have the same origine & nature; & are intended of GOD to answer the same purpose — to correct what is amiſs, & to keep up that dependence on him which is neceſsary for all men, for kings & governors as well as for private persons, — for nations, as well as particular men. The example of David, therefore, in what related to his spiritual concerns, is just as proper for our instruction, as if he had been a private person like ourselves; or we like him rulers & governors.

Not only in public, but in private concerns, the ways of providence are often dark & mysterious to short sighted, erring man. We discern not the deſign of infinite wisdom & goodneſs in permitting numberleſs evils to arise & continue in the world. When-therefore they come upon us, we are apt to be impatient under them — to think them too severe in degree, & too long in continuance. Our own benefit requires that this temper be corrected, that we be called back to a ſenſe of our duty, & put in mind of our obligations to refer every thing to the will & good pleasure of our heavenly father. That we be taught to tarry GODS leisure, to be strong in faith & hope in him — For then only may we expect he will comfort our hearts when we do, on all emergencies, & under all afflictions, put our trust in him.

That he does not willingly afflict or grieve the children of men, GOD has aſsured us — he has also declared that it is with a view to their good — to bring them to reflection on their own ways, & lead them to examine in what state of heart they are towards him. Considering the frailty of human nature, & the proneneſs of the human heart to error, it is certainly matter of advantage to have ſeaſons of recollection preſented to us by the dispensations of GOD's providence. For if left to ourselves, surrounded with the good things of this world, with health & appetite to enjoy them, few poſſibly would remain uncorrupted by the poison of prosperity — We should forget our dependence on GOD's providence, & think this world allſufficient for our happineſs; & old age or death would overtake us buried in its buſineſs, or besotted with its pleasures, forgetful of GOD, & unprovided for eternity. But when the hand of our heavenly Father is on us, & he takes from us that in which we trusted, or delighted, or on which we depended — our wealth, our friends, or our health — we are ſensibly convinced of the instability of all worldly enjoyments; & are led to reflect on our uncertain state in this world, & to provide for that eternal duration to which we shall, in the common course of nature, be soon called.

Afflictions do not spring out of the earth, nor do they come by accident. They are the allotments of infinite

finite wisdom, the corrections of paternal tenderneſs, the admonitions of divine love, & are intended of GOD to reform something amiſs, or to put us in mind of our dependance & mortality, or to take from us something in which we too much trusted or delighted, to the weakening our love of GOD & trust in him, or to exercise our patience, try our hope, prove our faith, & confirm our reliance on our heavenly father, & thereby fit us to enjoy the bleſsings of his kingdom.

These reasons are given by the holy apostle, why GOD afflicts his own children, & visits those with adverſity who are to be heirs of eternal glory. But if afflictions are thus intended, & calculated to serve so good purpoſes, it will follow of courſe, that it is our duty to conſider them in that light, to submit to them with patience & reſignation, & to endeavour, & beg of GOD to enable us, to improve them to their proper end. If we are impatient under them, & indulge immoderate grief, we frustrate the benevolent design of God towards us, & prove ourselves unworthy of his paternal regard — we loſe the benefit of the dispensation — have the pain & the grief, but not the advantage that proper conduct would draw from it. But if we stand corrected, & ſubmit with patience to the chastisements of our heavenly father, endeavouring after greater & more exact conformity to the divine will — with humble trust in the mercy & goodneſs of God, that he will enable us by his grace to improve his visitation to the advancement of his glory, & the increase of our own piety & holineſs, we may, with humility, expect he will remove his hand, & comfort us again, since our afflictions have had ſo good an effect on us: And should they be of such a kind that we cannot be restored to the same state of enjoyment that we were in before — we may reaſonably hope & ought to pray, that the loſs of temporal may be made up to us in spiritual bleſsings, & that the comforts of which we are deprived, may be succeeded by a fuller sense of GODS favor,

&

& more manifest consolations of his Spirit.

In this vale of mortality every thing is fleeting & uncertain — & every one must expect to meet with afflictions in a greater or leſs degree. Conſiderations of this kind must therefore always be in ſeaſon, because we ought always to be prepared to submit to the will of God, who being infinite in wisdom & goodneſs, will always do what is best for us upon the whole. Let us then endeavour to bring our hearts to that best of all states — a readineſs to embrace with thankfulneſs whatever God ſees proper for us — to be content & pleased to wait his pleasure & will, not only as to the kind & degree, but alſo as to the duration of our sufferings. Let us also be strong in the exercise of faith — that he will make our afflictions conducive to our greater happineſs, & will turn again, & comfort our hearts, if we do thus trust in him.

Affliction implies suffering; & when we suffer it is natural to complain & lament. But though we feel, and ſuffer, & lament as men, let us bear & behave as as Christians —

– as men who have hope in another life, & expectations of blessings infinitely greater than this world can either give or take away.

Should GOD see proper to deprive us of the fruit of our own honest labour & industry, or of what we have received from our ancestors, & should reduce us from affluence to narrow circumstances – we must, it is true, feel the stroke – but we ought to feel it as Christians – as those who have hope in another life; & who know that neither poverty nor riches are marks of the favor or displeasure of God; but are either of them best for us as it shall seem best to him; & that all things shall work together for good to them that love & obey him – that he can easily make up the loss of worldly wealth by the blessed satisfaction that always arises from humility & contentment – And that if we lay up treasure in heaven, it will be liable to no accidents, but will endure forever, & forever make us happy in its enjoyment.

If he should deprive us of our friends & connections — thoſe whom we loved, & in whom we delighted, & on whom we depended for comfort & ſatisfaction, poſsibly for ſubſiſtance & protection — though we must feel the stroke, let us feel it in the spirit of patient resignation; not like thoſe who have no faith in GOD, & no hope of a bleſsed immortality. The heavenly inheritance which is prepared for the children of GOD ought to engage our attention, & be the object of our hope, both for ourselves & our friends. If they are such as we ought to wish them to be, to have pleasure in them — we ſhould, when they are taken from us humbly hope that GOD has taken them to his mercy. And why should we lament ~~that~~ that they are gone before us to the kingdom of our heavenly father? Had they lived long, we must have died, & left them to mou for us. Here we are but sojourners & pilgrims & have no abiding city, but we ſeek one to come. Let it then be our endeavour, so to live in faith & obedience to GOD, that when this mortal life is ended, we may be fit inhabitants of that city which hath foundations stable & durable, whoſe builder & maker is GOD.

Or should it pleaſe GOD to visit us with sickneſs & declining health, & thereby deprive us of many enjoyments which render this world pleaſing & delighting to us— the pain we must feel; but Christianity will enable us to draw advantage even from thence. As sickneſs deprives us of the pleaſures & enjoyments of this life, it gives us opportunity, nay compels us to think of the next. It weakens the force of many temptations, & strips off the deluſive appearance in which the pleaſures of the world too often array themselves. It gives the mind time to abſtract itself from the world & its vanities, & to converse with itself, & its GOD— an opportunity which perhaps we should otherwise never have enjoyed. It calls forth the exercise of patience, & of faith & trust in GOD, becauſe all other dependences are found to be vain— & thus by depriving us of every confidence, it ſtrengthens our hope in the divine mercy & goodneſs.

These are the grand sources from which afflictions ariſe, & these are common to all, & therefore all are concerned in the due improvement of them. And a little reflection on what has been said will convince us, that under these, & all other afflictive incidents & circumstances, the text directs us to that very conduct which both reason & duty require — to tarry GODs leisure — to wait his time — to be content that he should dispose & regulate all things for us, as to him ſeemeth best — to arm ourselves with patience, & put our trust in GOD, being confident that he will support us under afflictions, however great they may be in degree or long in continuance — to be ſtrong in faith & hope, that he will sanctify the dispensations of his providence to us, & make them the means of our increase in grace & all holy tempers, & that after we have ſuffered a while according to his will in patience & resignation, he will comfort us again with the sense of his own love, & the power of his Holy Spirit — And that when this mortal life is ended, he will through the merit of our Redeemer, reward our sufferings here, with the glory that shall be revealed in his own heavenly kingdom. So be it, O blessed GOD! thou kind father of men & angels — To thee, with thy Son, & thy Holy Ghost, be glory, & honor, & thanksgiving, & praise, by all the creatures whom thou hast made. Amen.

Passages to be inserted in the preceeding discourse —

(At this mark †, page 7th) Nor did the ground of his confidence fail him. Through courage & strength inspired by almighty God, he had slain the lion & bear who assaulted his flock. Through courage & strength from the same source, he smote & slew the Philestine giant who defied the armies of the living God. By this event his country was delivered from the destruction of war, & the ravages of a fierce & incensed enemy — the death of one man, slain by a stripling whom God had inspired, became the defeat of the Philestine army. Ever victorious must that courage ~~[illegible]~~ be which God excites. Ever successful must those means be which he appoints for the accomplishment of his purposes, however insignificant they may appear in human estimation.

(At this mark ‡, page 7th) Saul was slain by the Philistines on mount Gilboa, & David became king of the tribe of Judah, without any conspiracy or sinister contrivance of his, but by the voluntary consent of that tribe.

By the command of God Samuel had formerly anointed him to the Regal authority. He trusted to the divine veracity, that God would make good the promise he had given him by the mouth of his prophet. Twice did he refrain from taking Sauls life when he was in his power, choosing rather to tarry the Lords leisure than hastily ascend the promised throne by violence & murder of him who held it by the appointment of God.

Times & seasons he knew are in the hand of God, & however he himself was persecuted from place to place, & his life industriously sought, he had no right to intermeddle in the accomplishment of Gods purpoſes without his expreſs direction. Accordingly, after three years the ſon of Saul was removed from his throne by the treachery of his own servants, & David peaceably succeeded to the throne of Israel.

(At this mark ≢, page 8) The ark & habitation of God were then at Jerusalem, the capital of the kingdom, from whence David had been driven out. And it appears to me that in this declaration of his faith & hope in God there is more included than a mere desire to be reinstated on his throne. His mentioning the ark & habitation of God shews the bleſsings of the public worship & service of God were what his heart principally longed after, & to which he ardently wished to be restored. In this Psalm also is this wish earnestly expreſsed; "One thing have I desired of the Lord, which I will require" — which I will constantly pray for — "even that I may dwell

"in the house of the Lord all the days of my life,
"to behold the fair beauty of the Lord, & to visit
"his temple".

To these happy privileges the victory of Davids army over his rebellious son restored him. And it ought to be the earnest wish & endeavour of every Christian to recover these blessings whenever he is deprived of them. But especially should it be his earnest desire & fervent prayer to God; that the body of sin being subdued in him, he may dwell in the courts of heaven forever, behold the fair beauty, & contemplate the glory of the Redeemer, whose victory over sin & death, & triumphant ascension to the heavenly Jerusalem hath opened to him a free entrance into the city of God most high.

As this confidence in the love of God is your profeſsion, it ought also to be your practice, & lead you to wait on the Lord & be of good courage in all circumstances that shall happen to you. The numberleſs instances of the love of God which we here receive ought to inspire our hearts with the sure hope that if we do our duty, & live as he directs, he will, in his own good time, deliver us from all evil both in this world & in the next, & make us partakers of eternal happineſs in heaven.

The proper influence these considerations ought to have on us is to engage us patiently to tarry the Lords leisure, to be strong in faith, & put our trust in the Lord. The few & evil days of our pilgrimage in this world will soon be ended; & if we preſerve our faith & trust in God, we shall then, through the merit of our Redeemer, obtain those mansions which he hath prepared for those who love & obey him. Amen.

Part the Second.

In the former part I endeavoured to point out the propriety & neceſsity of trusting absolutely in the power & goodneſs of God, under all circumstances that can happen to us. Our ignorance & weakneſs demand this of us; & the relation we stand in to him, being his creatures, & the redeemed of his Son, makes it our reasonable duty. That our own interest is also concerned in the matter, I endeavoured to shew from some circumstances in the life of David; by which it appears that in his greatest distreſses he acted on that principle wch. he recommends to others, faith & trust in God; and that God did regard his faith, & save him from his trouble. He tarried the Lords leisure & was regarded; He put his trust in God & was delivered. Be his example our pattern.

The design of almighty God &c: (paragraph at the bottom of page 8)

1794.

Sermon the Second.

Holy Thursday, or the Aſcention of our Lord.

Mark XVI. 19.

So then, after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, & sat on the right hand of God.

Having been led by the Church to celebrate the reſurrection of Jesus the Saviour from the dead on Easter Sunday, &, on the subsequent Sundays, to conſider & bleſs God for the many & great bleſsings thence derived to us, & also the duties that result from it; together with the strong obligations it lays upon us to love & obey God, to trust in him, & to live in all Christian holineſs & purity, that we may, through our Redeemer, obtain that future world, by the reſurrection of our mortal bodies to eternal life, We are now called to the contemplation of his triumphant Aſcension into heaven, & session at the right hand of God the Father.

This event makes one of the articles of our Creed, or summary of Christian faith which the Church requires us to repeat & to aſsent to it with a hearty & sincere Amen every time we aſsemble for the public worship of our almighty Creator: That so having our minds refreshed by the recollection of the principal points of Christian doctrine, & our faith & trust in God, the Father, Son, & Holy Ghost strengthened & made known unto men, we may, with greater energy of devotion offer up our joint praises & petitions to the great object of our hope & adoration. I have, therefore, chosen the text which I have reade to you for the subject of my discourse, because it will give me an opportunity of explaining this article of our faith & shewing what it requires us to believe.

I shall, therefore, consider,

1. The Ascension of Jesus Christ into heaven.
2. His sitting on the right hand of God.
3. The end for which he is exalted to this most excellent dignity.
4. I shall make such reflections as present themselves from the consideration of these points. And,

1. I am to consider the Ascension of Christ into heaven, & enquire what we are to believe concerning it.

That paſsage of ſcripture from which the text is taken together with other places of the holy book, informs us, that our Lord Jesus having broken the bars of death & roſe from the grave, continued forty days on earth, conversing with his disciples, giving them the most convincing proofs of his resurrection, instructing them in the nature of his kingdom, & fitting them for the proper discharge of that great work to which he had called them,— the preaching of pardon & reconciliation with God, & of eternal ſalvation in a future world through him: That at the end of this period he gave them his last Commiſsion to this effect, "Go ye into all the world" as God shall give you opportunity, "& preach the Gospel to every creature" that will hear & attend to the glad tidings of ſalvation through me: "He that believeth" in me, "& is baptised" in my name, & thereby made a member of my Church, "shall be saved", if he continue faithful & obedient to the end of his life; "but "he that believeth not", but rejecteth my mediation, or continueth impenitent in ſin, "shall be damned", that is condemned of God: And my power & ſpirit shall go with you, to guide & support you in the discharge of this Commiſsion; not only to enable *you* to do such signs & wonders as shall gain credit to your preaching, but to communicate that power to others who through your preaching shall believe on me: For "in my name they

"shall cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;
"they shall take up serpents, & if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands
"on the ſick & they shall recover". "So then after the Lord
"had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven",
— roſe bodily in their ſight from the earth into the clouds,
"far above all principality & power, & every name that
"is named, not only in this world, but also in that which
"is to come" (Eph. 1. 21)

This Aſcenſion of Jesus is to be understood of his human nature only. His divinity is every where present, filling earth & heaven & the whole immensity of ſpace, & is, therefore, incapable of paſsing from place to place. Of this divine nature Jesus ſpoke when conversing with Nicodemus he said of himself, "The Son of man which is in
"heaven". In another place he speaks of himself, that is of his divine nature, as existing before Abraham was.

We are, therefore, to believe that the only begotten &

eternal Son of God, who for our ſalvation took our nature upon him, & in that nature, conſiſting of a human body & ſoul, died & rose again, did, forty days after, in the ſight of his Apoſtles & followers, convey his ſoul & body, — the same that had been crucified & raised from death — from this earth, through the regions of the air, unto the highest heaven — the presence of the glorious majeſty of God; And sat down, or took his residence, in that human nature, at the right hand of God. This I am next to conſider; to wit,

2. What is meant by Christ's ſitting on the right hand of God.

This expreſſion does not neceſſarily imply bodily posture; though as Christ aſcended in his body, I ſee no reason to exclude it. But the phrase more particularly denotes the state of rest (ceaſing from ſuffering) dignity, pre-eminence & power to which his human nature is exalted, as the reward of that

toil, & pain, & infamy, & disgrace which he endured in
the time of his humiliation. "Jesus Christ", saith St.
Peter (1 Epist. III. 22) "is gone into heaven, & is on the right
"hand of God, angels & authorities, & powers being made
"subject unto him". St. Paul also declares that God hav-
ing "raised Christ from the dead, ſet him at his own
"right hand in the heavenly places, far above all
"principality, & power, & might, & dominion, & every
"name that is named, not only in this world, but alſo
"in that which is to come: And hath put all things
"unde his feet, & gave him to be head over all things
"to the Church (Eph. 1. 20 &c) He further saith, that
this exaltation of Jesus was in conſequence of his volun-
tary humiliation — in reward of his condeſcenſion
in taking on him the form of a ſervant, & of his pati-
ent endurance of the ſufferings to which the accom-
plishment of our redemption expoſed him. "Wherefore",
saith he, "God also hath highly exalted him, & given
"him

"him a name which is above every name"; that is, power above all power: "That at the name of Jesus every "knee should bow, of things in heaven, & things in earth, "& things under the earth; And that every tongue ſhould "confeſs that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the "Father (Philipp. II. 9,10,11)

So that the ſum of what our religion requires us to believe concerning the Aſcenſion of Jesus the Saviour, & his ſeſsion on the right hand of God is this, That the human nature which Jesus aſsumed when he came into the world is received up into heaven, & made partaker of that bliſs, & glory, & power, which, before his incarnation, the eternal Son of God enjoyed with the almighty Father.

3. I was to consider the end for which Jesus is exalted to this most excellent dignity.

We have seen that the humanity of Jesus is exalted to the right hand of God; that is, is invested with boundleſs power & dominion. There are three particular ends provided for by this exaltation of Jesus.

1. That reparation might be made to him for the miseries of his life & the ignominy of the croſs which he willingly endured for our redemption: That as he was, in his human nature, debaſsed to the lowest by wicked men & evil spirits, he might in the same nature, be exalted to the highest eminency of the majesty of God.

2. That he might shew the full poſseſsion of this power by ruling & conducting the affairs of the world according to his own justice & goodneſs. Particularly, that he might protect, preserve, & sanctify his Church by his grace & Holy Spirit, in the midst of this wicked & miserable world, & "present it to himself" at the last day,
"a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any
"such thing; but that it should be holy, & without
"blemish" (Eph. V.27)

3.

3. That he might be constituted final judge of all men, & at the end of the world, when he shall deliver up his mediatorial kingdom, might execute judgment on all men, & recompense them according as their life hath been compared with that dispensation of mercy under which divine goodneſs placed them.

The advantages which from these circumstances result to us are evident. Jesus hath, in our nature, ascended to exaltation & glory. Our nature, therefore, is capable of glory & exaltation through Jesus. Jesus hath now the government of the world in his hands; We can, therefore, depend on his justice, & mercy, & goodneſs, that it shall be conducted to the best advantage of his creatures, whom he so loved as to give himself up for them even to the death of the croſs. Particularly that he will preserve his holy Church, so that neither the arts of wicked men, nor the gates of hell shall prevail

vail to destroy it. And as he will preserve it by his power, so he will ſanctify it by his Holy Spirit, & finally receive it to glory with himſelf. That as he is in his humanity conſtituted the final judge of all men, We ſhall be judged by one in our own nature, who knows whereof we are made; & who, having felt our infirmities, will judge not only righteous, but merciful judgment. It is therefore our duty till that day come, to reverence & obey him, to trust in him & pray to him as our rightful head, & King, & Lord, & God.

4. I come now to make such reflections as present themselves from the ſubject that has been before us. And

1. Christ being exalted to the right hand of the majeſty of God, ever liveth as our Great High-priest in heaven to make interceſſion for us — to be our perpetual patron & advocate, to plead our cause, & to present our prayers through his own merits

to the almighty Father.

How great is the comfort & support which this conſideration affords to the faithful penitent! How surely may he expect forgiveneſs of ſins & all other benefits of Christ's redemption from his own prevailing interceſsion!

And if he graciously intercede for us, surely he will dispense his grace & exert his power to defend his Church, & every member of it, from all the aſsaults of its enemies, & under all the weakneſses of nature. The allurements of the world, the strokes of adversity, the soothings of prosperity, the cravings of bodily appetite, the impulse of malignant paſsions, the temptations of our spiritual enemy, the insults, oppreſsions, & persecutions of proud, & unthinking men will ſurely be noticed by him; &, if we ~~are~~ be faithful in prayer & holy obedience, will be so directed by his heavenly wisdom, as to promote our best, our eternal interest. His power & goodness, the comfort of his grace & Holy Spirit, will, as he shall see best for us, guard us from all evil in this world, or support us under it; and most assuredly will save us from that dreadful state of evil which awaits the wicked in the world to come.

2. The Ascension of Jesus should confirm our faith in his divine mission, & establish it beyond every degree of doubt. It is impossible he should have been received up into heaven, unless he had been sent of God, & approved by him. All his declarations, therefore, are true. By raising him from the dead, & exalting him to his own right hand, God hath set his seal & given his attestation to all that he taught, & did, & promised.

3. The Ascension of Jesus ought to establish our hope of a future heavenly inheritance. As our

forerunner, we are aſsured he hath entered into heaven, to take poſseſsion of it & prepare mansions for his faithful ſervants, that where he is, they may also be. In their nature he aſcended, their nature is, therefore, capable of aſcending thither thro' him. He aſcended as their head: they shall follow as members of that body of which he is the head.

Though, therefore, the pious Christian, in his mortal body, may be vile dust & miſerable ashes, through Jesus who is the reſurrection & the life, who is exalted of God to be a prince, a Saviour, to give repentance, remiſsion of sins, & eternal life to all who believe in him & obey him, his mortal body ſhall, in the day of God, put on immortality; & being clothed on with its house from heaven, shall be exalted to that same place whither his Saviour Christ is gone before.

4. As the belief of the exaltation of Jesus dispels all the fears which arise from the power of the enemies of our salvation & from the weakneſs of nature; & is a sure ground of hope & confidence in God; It ought to exalt our affections & fix them on that place where only we can expect full & permanent happineſs.

Every thing in this life is fleeting & uncertain, & not worthy of our affections. The most promising state of prosperity often vanishes like the bursting of a bubble, & leaves not a trace behind — nothing but the sad recollection that once we promised ourselves better days. Best for us are the days of affliction if they lead us to make a true estimate of human life, & teach us wisdom enough to live accordingly.

Nothing can make us feel our own weakneſs & folly, nor call forth the real strength & energy of the human soul, nor shew the full power of divine grace, but the engine of affliction. Till this be applied, we know not ourselves — where our weakneſs lies, nor where our strength. And till we know ourselves, we can not, as we ought, know him that made us.

To know that we breathe, & eat, & drink, & sleep, that we are merry & laugh, that we are delighted & full of glee, is not to know ourselves. And to believe that there is a great & glorious being who made the world, is not to know God. To know ourselves we must feel our own weakneſs, & dependent nature: And to know God, we must be sensible of his all sufficiency & goodneſs. In other words; We must feel the strength of our appetites & paſsions, & be deeply senſible of our own inability to direct & control them so as to ensure happineſs to ourselves: And we must feel & know that God only is able to do that for us which we cannot do for ourselves; & that if we resign ourselves up to him, & in faith &

& patience rest upon him, he will be our friend, & enable us to resist & control the impetuosity of appetite & paſsion, & make them subservient to our greater happineſs, & more exalted glory.

The events of this world & of the body are also beyond our management. We cannot command health, nor life, nor peace, nor food, nor raiment, nor any thing in this world. All these things are held by so precarious a tenure that it is folly to call any of them our own. When we are convinced of these things, not merely in speculation, just so as to aſsent to them as propoſitions,— But when the heart feels their truth so as to live & act upon it, we become duly prepared for that faith, & hope, & trust in God, which will abide all tryals, & endure all things. Then shall we know aſsuredly that God is the strength of our life; & unleſs he will be our portion forever, we must forever be poor, & wretched, & miserable.

To know our own dependent state, our subjection to evil, our own inability to help ourselves, & the insufficiency of all this world can give to confer happineſs on us, is a leſson that must be learned by every soul that looks for happineſs on reasonable grounds. And when this leſson is learned — I mean not in speculation & theory, but so as to make it the ground of real practice, that we may live & act on it — all is learned that really concerns us. This state of the heart will call forth the energy of God to operate in it; it will form the capacity of heavenly happineſs, & it will lay its foundation so deep in humility, that its structure will rise, through resignation to the will of God, through faith & confidence in his power & goodneſs, ſo that its top shall reach the skies, & unite itself to the happineſs of him who filleth the whole creation with the bleſsings of his love.

The scene of our true happineſs lies in the future world. To obtain it will be the grand object of the reasonable man; & the most earnest endeavour of the pious Christian will be to prepare himself for the full enjoyment of it. He will, therefore, set his affections on the things above, & make them the subject of his constant meditation. He will open his heart in earnest prayer to almighty God, that he would inspire him with the wisdom which is from above; which seeketh the things which are above; which is pure, peaceable, gentle, full of mercy & good fruits, easy to be intreated, without wrangling & without guile; to endue him with strength to restrain & control the evil passions & appetites of his nature, & direct them to their proper end; to give him his grace & Holy Spirit, to be in him the principle of holiness to the end of his life; to enable him to have his conversation in heaven whither his Saviour Christ is gone before; that when he shall come again in

Holy Thursday.

power & great glory to judge the quick & the dead, he may rise to the life immortal, through him who is the resurrection & the life, Jesus the Son of God. To him the King of Glory, who sitteth on the right hand of the majesty on high, in unity with the Father almighty, & the Spirit of holineſs, be glory & praise now & forever. Amen.

back, & wonders how he has got through the past. He remembers many distreſses which appeared unsurmountable in their approach, from which he was delivered by that all-bountiful Being alone who *openeth* Psa. 145. 16. *his hand & filleth all things living with plenteouſneſs.* His constant wants put him perpetually in mind of his dependence on Almighty GOD: And the constant supply which he has found for those wants, in ways & by means which he never thought of, are so many leſsons to impreſs upon his mind, the power & goodneſs of his heavenly father. He can therefore scarcely fail to remember & acknowledge his dependence on the providence of GOD, & to live under an habitual sense of it; to refreſh his mind & cheer his heart with the grateful recollection of that divine interposition which has so often & so unexpectedly relieved him. From this world he expects no happineſs: His heart then is free from that attachment to the world which riches produce, & the better diſpoſed to ſeek that which is reſerved in heaven for the faithful ſervants of GOD.

[Sorry I am that I must here again interpoſe a caution, viz: that I mean not to repreſent these as the neceſsary consequences of poverty. That poor people are often proud, revengeful, malicious, addicted to many & great vices, forgetful of GOD & regardleſs of his laws, is no leſs true than hard to be accounted for. It will not however follow but that I have fairly described the natural tendency of a state of poverty, though this tendency may be overcome by a particular perversity of diſpoſition, by bad education, or evil example. And probably that preſsing neceſsity which poverty sometimes brings with it may prove too hard for those better principles which may have been too faintly inculcated, or too negligently received, to make any lasting or effectual impreſsion.

The sum of the matter then is this. Poverty tends to produce & strengthen dependence on GOD, to make men resigned to his will, & obedient to his commands; & to beget & bring to maturity those tempers & dispositions that are agreable to his nature. Riches tend to fill the heart of man with confidence & presumption; to make him forget GOD & disregard his commands, producing those tempers & dispositions that are contrary to his nature, & therefore destructive of happineſs with him. Lazarus was carried by the Angels into Abrahams bosom not merely because he had been poor in worldly wealth, but because he had obtained that poverty of spirit which made him capable of enjoying the riches of the kingdom of heaven; because he was of a meek, & humble, & patient, & resigned temper, full of faith, & hope & confidence in his GOD. The rich man was consigned to the torments of hell, because he trusted to uncertain riches, & forgot GOD that made him, placing that confidence in them that was due to GOD alone; looking to them for happineſs, & for security against the evils of life, when GOD ought to have been his hope & stay.

From this parable then let the rich learn, in the midst of their proſperity, to remember their humanity, to be mindful of their entire dependence upon GOD, to cultivate meekneſs, humility & reſignation, benevolence & charity, to consider their riches as the ſtores that GOD has laid up for the poor & indigent, & themselves as his ſtewards bound to administer relief to the needy with an open & liberal hand. And let the poor remember that it is their *duty* to be content with the ſtation which GOD's providence has allotted them; by diligence & frugality to provide as far as poſsible for their own ſupport; to be humble, & meek, & patient, & reſigned; not envying ye rich or coveting their wealth, but treating them with respect as ye ſervants of GOD; ſtriving earnestly to obtain the riches of GOD's kingdom. Then whether riches or poverty be our portion in this world, ye happineſs of heaven, thro' the merits of our Redeemer, ſhall be our reward in the next. And whenever it shall please GOD to call us out of this world we ſhall be received into thoſe everlasting habitations which he has prepared for them that love him. So be it bleſsed GOD, for his sake who has overcome death & hell, & opened to us the gate of everlasting life, Jesus Christ, our Saviour & Redeemer. Amen.

Islip 1817 both

Sermon the fourth.

The name of Christ.

Christmas-day, 1793.

Isaiah IX. 6.

For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given, & the government shall be on his ſhoulder; And his name shall be called, Wonderfu Counſellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of peace.

We are aſsembled, in unity, I trust, with the holy catholic Church of Christ, & in conformity wi its custom throughout the world, to celebrate the nativity of Jesus the Savior, when he came in our nature, to make atonement for ſin, & reconcile us to God. On this occasion I have redde to you, for the subject of my discourse, an eminent prophecy of Isaiah relating to the miraculous birth of that divine person, that by meditating on the titles the prophet hath given him by the inspiration of the Spirit of God, you may ſee the characters under which he was to appear among men, & the wonderful things he was to do for them.

The consequence, I hope, will be grateful hearts to Almighty God our heavenly Father for the gift of his Son for our redemption, lively faith in him, & in all the promises his goodneſs hath made to us through him, & dutyful obedience to his commands & institutions. Then ſhall the nativity of Christ be a ſavour of life unto life to us, & shall exalt us to honour & glory in his kingdom.

Unto us, said the prophet, *a Child is born, unto us a Son is given*. So ſtrong on him was the inspiration of the Almighty, that he declares in the preſent time what was not to take place till ages had paſsed away. Certain is the word of God; what he declares shall, in his own good time, come to paſs. The child, the Son then promiſed, when God saw best, even in the reign of Augustus the Roman Emperor, was born at Bethlehem, which place the old prophecies had marked out for his birth.

In the ſeventh chapter the prophet had uttered another prophecy of the ſame event, but differing in words & in some circumstances— *Behold, a virgin shall conceive & bear a Son, & shall call his name Immanuel*— God with us— God in our nature.

If we look into the beginning of St. Luke's Gospel, we shall find theſe prophecies of Isaiah to have been fulfilled in a most exact & wonderful manner. The angel Gabriel was ſent of God to a virgin of the house of David, whose name was Mary, to advertise her, that the favour of God had ſingled her out to accomplish these wonderful predictions of Isaiah; that by the power of the Holy Ghost she should conceive & bare a Son, & should call his name JESUS, because he should save his people from their ſins.

Afterward we find that she did bring forth her first-born Son, at Bethlehem, where she, by order of the imperial decree, went to be enrolled with her family. And that the happy event was at the same time announced by an angel to certain ſhepherds who were tending their flocks in the country — that with the angel a choir of the heavenly host attended, praising God & saying, *Glory to God in the highest, & on earth* *peace; Good-will towards men.*

Of this divine Person St. John spake when he said, *The word*, the Logos, the eternal Son of God, *was made flesh*, was born in our nature, *& dwelt among us*, tabernacled, pitched his tent in human nature; And thereby was literally, Immanuel, God in us.

And the government, said the prophet, *shall be on his ſhoulder*; that is, to speake in the idiom of our language, The weight, the administration of the government shall be on this *Child*, this *Son*, this *Immanuel*. So the prophet useth this phrase in speaking of Eliakim (XXII.22) *The key of the houſe of David will I lay on his shoulder: So he shall open, & none shall shut, & he shall shut, & none shall open*; That is, the management & care of the government shall be on him.

In the New Testament we shall find Christ, in several places declared to be the head of the Church. Speaking of him St. Paul saith expreſsly, And he is the head of the body the Church (Coloſs. I. 18) In Eph. I. 20,21,22. he expreſseth himself, though not in the same words, yet in terms full as strong— God raised Christ from the dead, & set him at his own right hand in heavenly places, far above all principality, & power, & might, & dominion, & every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; And hath put all things under his feet, & gave him to be head over all things to the Church.

Of himself the bleſsed Saviour said, All power is given to me in heaven & in earth. And in virtue of that supreme power which the Almighty Father had committed to him in his human nature, he commiſsioned his apostles

postles to preach his Gospel to the world, & build up his Church in it.

But not only Isaiah prophesied of the supereminent power of the Redeemer, Daniel also, when speaking of the kingdom of God, said, I saw in the night visions, & behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, & came to the Ancient of days, & they brought him near before him, And there was given him dominion, & glory, & a kingdom, that all people, nations & languages should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, & his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed (Dan. VII. 13, 14)

The supreme dominion of Christ over the world, & especially over the Church, which while the world continues must in part continue in it, is thus established & made known by prophecies in the Old Testament, & by their exact fulfilment in the New. So that according to the intention of God, signified in those prophecies, & in the accomplishment of them, the government is truly laid on Christs shoulder; the whole management of the world, & especially of his Church, is in his hands, & he is ruler even in the midst among his enemies (Ps. CX. 2)

And his name, said the prophet, shall be called Wonderful. That is, according to the Hebrew idiom, He shall be, what he is called, a Wonderful person. Wonderful indeed he was, being in person the eternal Son of God united to human nature — Immanuel, God in us.

Wonderful also was he in his love to us — leaving the throne of his eternal glory, he humbled himself in the nature of man, even to the death of the cross, a sacrifice for their sin.

Wonderful was he in his resurrection, aſcenſion, & ſeſsion at the right hand of God. Wonderful was he in his miracles — doing the works which none other ever did — healing the ſick, giving sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, speach to the dumb, life to the dead. Wonderful is he now in the government of the world, & of his Church — in all the dispensations of his providence & grace. Wonderful in the whole œconomy of our redemption, repreſented by St Paul as the masterpiece of divine wisdom. *God*, saith he, *created all things by Jesus Christ; To the intent that now unto the principalities & powers in heavenly places, might be know through the Church, the manifold wisdom of God* (Eph. III. 9,10)

The ~~next~~ title the prophet gives this divine

vine person is that of *Counſellor*.

This title is intended to expreſs the intimate knowledge which Christ hath of all the designs & counſels of the Almighty Father, *according to the eternal purpoſe which he purpoſed in Christ Jesus our Lord* (Eph. III. 11) Of this attribute St. John spake when he said, "*No* "man hath seen God at any time: The only begotten "Son who is in the boſom of the Father, he "hath declared him." (Jn. I. 18) To the same purpoſe Christ spake of himself, "No man knoweth "the Father, save the Son" (Matt. XI. 27)

Christ is also the *Counſellor* as that term relates to his Church, whoſe director & adviser he hath ever been in all her dangers & difficulties. And this office he exerciseth by the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, whom he sent to abide with her forever.

The next title of Christ is that of *The Mighty God*

God. This title is repeated by the prophet in the ninth chapter, & applied to the God of Israel; *The remnant of Jacob shall return unto the mighty God*. No Christian indeed who attends to what St. Paul hath said, that the almighty Father is invisible to human eyes, that no man hath ſeen or can ſee him, that the Son is the image or manifeſtation of the Father; & at the same time recollects the various appearances of Jehovah, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, & of Jacob, both before & under the diſpenſation of Moſes, can have any doubt that the Jehovah of the Jews is He whom Christians call the *Son of God*.

This opinion is confirmed by what Christ ſaid to the Jews (Jn. VIII. 58) *Verily, verily, Before Abraham was*, I am — ἐγώ εἰμι — before Abraham was born, I was what I now am, Jehovah. —

For

In this ſenſe the Jews must have understood Christ. Why elſe did they attempt to stone him? Not because he had cast any reflection on Abraham, by making himſelf prior in existence to him. They had borne his declaration that Abraham rejoiced to ſee his day, which neceſsarily implied his prior existance. Nor was it because he made himself the Son of God; for in a certain ſenſe, they ſuppoſed themselves to be so. But becauſe he being a man made himſelf Jehovah their God. And to this purpoſe they explain themselves when on another occasion he had said to them, *I & my Father are one* (Jn. X. 30)

The same eminency of power is also attributed to Christ by St. John in Rev. I. 8. Where speaking of himself to St. John, he saith, *I am Alpha & Omega, the beginning & the ending*

ing, which is, & which was, & which is to come, the almighty.

The next appellation of Christ is *The everlasting Father*. If we follow this common translation of the Hebrew, it is very applicable to Christ. It was usual with the Jews to give the title of Father to Masters & Teachers, conſidering them as Fathers of their ſcholars & ſervants. Several instances of this occur in the Bible. Elijah is thus accosted by Elisha his ſcholar, *My Father, my Father, the chariot of Israel, & the horſemen thereof.* The ſervants of Naaman the Syrian speak to him in the same stile (2 Kings V. 13). Other instances may be found in 2 Kings VI. 21, & XIII. 19, when Joash the king of Israel came to visit the prophet Elisha in his last ſickneſs.

Christ speaking to his disciples, in Jo. XIII. 33, calls them *little children*. Again when he appeared to them, after his resurrection, as they were fishing, & enquired whether they had any meat, he accosts them with the appellation of *children* (Jn. XXI. 5) St. Paul stiles himself the *Father* of the converted Corintheans (1 Cor. IV. 15) and in Heb. II. 15, applies to Christ & his followers the passage of Isaiah (VIII. 18) *I & the children which the Lord hath given me.*

I cannot however help thinking that there is more intended in this name of Christ, *The everlasting Father*, than is explained by that customary way of speaking among the Jews.

The Greek version of the Old Testament renders the Hebrew words which we have translated *Everlasting Father*, Πατηρ μέλλοντος άιονος, *the Father of the age or world to come*. The common Latin translation renders them the same way: And the critics in the Hebrew language agree that the words will well bear this translation

Now the kingdom of Meſsiah or the state of the Gospel in this world — the dispensation of Christ — is spoken of as being μέλλων αἰών, the age or world to come in Mat. XII. 32. Heb. II. 5. VI. 5.

In Heb. V. 9. St. Paul calls Christ the *author of eternal ſalvation*. Why may we not then ſuppoſe that the title *Everlasting Father*, is applied to Christ as he is the Redeemer of the world, the author of that state of ſalvation in which his Church or kingdom is, by his providence & love, placed in this world. This state, as it relates to the Christian Church, & to the actual atonement for ſin, made by the death of Christ, was future when Iſaiah uttered his prophecy. It was then the future age or dispensation of the grace & salvation of God. To us that prophecy is fulfilled. We live in that age, or under that dispensation which was then future, but is now present.

The Jewish Doctors always understood the world to come, to mean the age or dispensation of Messiah. They call it also the last age, that is the last dispensation of the grace & salvation of God to man, & suppose it was to continue to the end of the world. God grant we may so live in it, that we may obtain, when this world shall end, that eternal life which is promised to all those who obey him.

That future world is to us the coming age — the world to come — the final dispensation of God to man — the dispensation which shall never end. But not the dispensation of grace, & mercy, & salvation to the world, but of justice, & retribution according to the things done in the body, whether the be good or bad.

The last title by which Christ is named by

The name of Christ. by the prophet is, *The Prince of Peace.*

Eminently does this title belong to Christ, & frequently do the inspired writers attribute all the blessed effects of peace to him. This same prophet deſcribes the reign of Meſsiah in ſuch lovely terms as cannot fail to call forth the tenderest feelings of the human heart; *They shall beat their ſwords into plow-shares, & their ſpears into pruning-hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more* (II. 4) He also deſcribeth the peaceful principles & design of the reign of Meſsiah by peace & quietneſs among the brute creatures; *The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid; the calf, & the young lion, & the fatling shall dwell & lie down together, & a little child shall lead them* &c. (XI. 6) How full of comfort are the words in which he proclaimeth peace through Meſsiah to the penitent

tent! *Peace, peace, to him that is far off, & to him that is near*, that is to the Gentile & to the Jew, *saith the Lord, & I will heal him.* (LVII. 19)

The holy psalmist, under the same divine Spirit of prophecy, describing the reign of Meſsiah, saith, "In his time the righteous shall flourish, "& abundance of peace, so long as the moon "endureth" (Pſ. LXXII. 7)

Other testimonies from the prophets of the Old Testament might easily be added to these, was it neceſsary. But we will rather turn our attention to the New Testament, & see how well that accords with these declarations of the Old.

There we find the heavenly host celebrating the birth of Jesus by aſcribing praise to God, & declaring through him then born into the world, *Glory to God in the highest, & on earth peace, good-will towards men* (Luke II. 14)

Of him St. Paul saith, *He is our peace, who hath*

hath made both one, — uniting Jews & Gentiles in one Church. And again, He *came & preached — peace to you who were afar off* — to you Gentiles who were not in covenant with God — *& to them that were nigh*, even to the Jews his covenanted people (Eph. II. 14, 17) In Heb. VII. 2. speaking of the priesthood of Christ, that it was after the order of Melchisedec, & not after the order of Aaron, he saith he was *king of righteousness*, & also *king of peace*.

Peace & good-will are therefore ~~as~~ the proper fruits of the kingdom of Christ; & they who, professing to be his disciples, can bear nothing without calling for vengeance in slaughter & bloodshed, have departed far from the principles of it. — Peace becomes the Christian, & is the highest ornament of his profession. Destruction & war are from the prince of darkness.

We have now taken a short view of those eminent

of

nent titles by which Christ is described in the text; & from them we may so far understand his nature as to know what he is to do for us, & how well he is qualified for the office of the Redeemer of men, which God hath committed to him.

Upon *him* God hath laid the government of the world & of his Church— *He is wonderful* in his nature & works, being God & man united— *He is the Counsellor*, intimately knowing the purposes & decrees of God— *He is the mighty God*, by whom the world, & every thing in it, was made; & who now preserves & governs it by his power & wisdom— *He is the everlasting Father*, the author of redemption, & of the grace of God to man— of the dispensation of the Gospel— of eternal salvation to all who obey him— *He is the prince of peace*, who hath made peace with God for us, & brought his peace to us,—

whoſe holy doctrines tend to inspire us with peace towards each other, & with good-will to all men; with peace also of conſcience & hope in God.

The birth of this *child*, the gift of this Son, when he came personally in human nature to manifest his name, & make himself known to the world as the Redeemer of it, we this day celebrate with joyful lips, &, I trust, with grateful hearts. Ever may this gratitude be kept alive & increased in us! Ever may we aſcribe glory, & praise, & thanksgiving to the holy & undivided Trinity, Father, Son, & Holy Ghost, for this inestimable instance of love & mercy to miserable man! May the earnest deſire of our hearts & endeavour of our lives, to answer, by our holy & christian conversation, the end of the birth of the Son of God in our nature, ever accompany our gratitude for so great a bleſsing! Let us therefore always remember that the deſign of the manifestation of this grace of God to us is to teach us to deny ungodliness & every worldly lust, & to live righteously, soberly, & godly in this present world.

The consideration of this subject ought also to excite us to look to Jesus, & put our trust in him, under all those glorious titles & characters which the text ascribes to him. For,

If the government of the world, & particularly of the Church, be on the shoulder of the Son of God, we ought to put our trust in him, & make our prayers unto him in all difficulties & dangers, either of body or soul. If he be wonderful in his nature & works, & intimately acquainted with all the purposes of God, we ought to depend on him for the fulfilling of all the promises God hath made to us. If he be the mighty God – the everlasting Father – the author of eternal salvation

vation to all who obey him, we ought to trust in his power, & be obedient to his will in all things, that we may partake of that eternal ſalvation of which he is the author. If he be the prince of peace, we ought to pray earnestly that his peace may come to us, & may be with us forever— the peace of God which paſseth all understanding, which will teach us to live in peace with all men, & which will make us fit subjects of his kingdom of peace & love in heaven.

Let us therefore strive to promote peace among all thoſe with whom we converse, by cultivating the mild & benign propensities of the human heart, & following constantly thoſe things which make for peace, being persuaded that we most resemble the prince of peace, & best promote the deſign of his birth, when we most promote peace & good will among men.

Then too shall we be best disposed to ſing with the heavenly choir, Glory to God in the highest, when in obedience to his will we earnestly endeavour that there may be peace on earth, & good will among men.

To the God of peace — the blessed Trinity, Father, Son, & Holy Ghost, be adoration, & praise & dominion, world without end. Amen.

Sermon the fifth.

The perpetuity of Christs kingdom.

Sunday after Christmas, 1793.

Isaiah IX.7.

Of the increase of his government & peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David & upon his kingdom, to order it, & to establish it with judgment & with justice, from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts shall do this.

Among the titles & characters of Christ contained in the 6th verse of this chapter, there are two to which the text particularly refers, his government of the world & of his Church, & his being the prince of peace. The text saith,

1. Of the increase of his government & peace there shall be no end.

2.

2. That his government shall be exercised on the throne of David.

3. That thereby that throne shall be established in judgment & justice forever.

4. That the zeal of the Lord of hosts shall do this.

1. The text declares that of the increaſe of Christs government & peace there shall be no end.

Of the perpetuity of the government of Christ, & of the peace to be obtained through him, holy scripture gives many & plain declarations. The twenty ſecond psalm evidently relates to king Meſsiah. It repreſents him as praying for long life, that is for the perpetual continuance of his kingdom as God-man, the Redeemer of the world. His prayer is heard. God grants him a long life, a reign forever & ever, & promiſeth him everlasting felicity. The forty fifth Psalm is of the same kind. It declares that God hath bleſsed King Meſsiah forever— that his throne shall endure forever— & that the people should give thanks unto him forever. Again, in the ſeventy ſecond psalm, speaking of king Meſsiah, it is said, They shall fear thee as long as the ſun & moon endureth; from one generation to another. In his time shall the righteous flourish, & abundance of peace, so long as the moon endureth. And in the verse before the text Meſsiah is called the everlasting Father; that is the author of eternal ſalvation.

That the peace to be obtained thro him is an endleſs peace, appears from the endleſs duration of his kingdom; for as long as that endureth, so long must the peace which cometh thro him continue.

Isaiah, speaking of the bleſsings of Christs kingdom, saith, The work of righteousneſs shall be peace, & the effect of righteousneſs quietneſs & aſsurance forever.

2. The text declareth that this government shall be exercised on the throne of David.

In the stile of the prophets Meſsiah is said to sit on the throne of David, because the promises concerning the perpetuity of Davids family & kingdom did principally relate to Christ, & were only completely fulfilled in him. The mystical, not the natural David hath a kingdom truly & properly everlasting. The latter died & was buried, & his sepulchre remained with his people: The former rose again to life, the third day after death was inflicted on him.

There is a declaration of Daniel to Nebuchadnezzer, in the interpretation of his dream, which directly declares the perpetuity of Christs kingdom, even when the royalty of Davids family seemed to be at an end, by the power of the Babylonians. *The God of heaven shall set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed; And the kingdom shall not be left to other people; but it shall break in peices, & consume all other kingdoms, & it shall stand forever.* (II. 44) Again the same prophet saith, "*There was given him*" — the Son of man — "*dominion*, & *glory*, & a *kingdom*, that all "people, nations, & languages should ſerve him: "His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which "shall not paſs away, & his kingdom that which "shall not be destroyed" (*VII*. 14)

On this account it is that Christ is frequently ly, in the ſcripture, called David; & the Son of David. The name signifies *beloved*, & is strictly applicable to Christ the well beloved Son of God. As the supporter of the throne of David, he is mentioned by Jeremiah, *They shall serve the Lord their God, & David their king, whom I will raise up unto them* (XXX. 9) Ezekiel also thus prophesieth of him, *I will set up one ſhepherd over them, & he shall feed them, even my servant David: He shall feed them, & he shall be their shepherd* (XXXIV. 23) In the same manner Hoſea speaks of him, *Afterward shall the children of Israel return, & ſeek the Lord their God, & David their king* (*III*. 5)

3. The text saith that the throne of David & his kingdom shall be ordered & established

ed by Messiah in justice & judgment.

That righteousness & equity are characteristics of Christs kingdom, the scripture gives the amplest testimony. Isaiah saith of him, *With righteousness shall he judge the poor, & reprove with equity for the meek of the earth* (XI.4) David also saith of him, *The sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre. Thou hast loved righteousness, & hated iniquity*: Wherefore God, even thy God hath anointed thee with the oil *of gladness above thy fellows* (XLV.7.8) Again, *Give the king,* or thou wilt give the king *thy judgments, O God, & thy righteousness unto the kings Son. Then shall he judge the people according unto right, & defend the poor. He shall keep the simple folk by their right, ~~&~~ defend the children of the poor, & punish the wrong*.

wrong doer. In his time shall the righteous flourish (LXXII. 1, 2, 4, 7)

4. The text informs us that the zeal of the Lord of hosts should do this. That is,

The regard God hath to his own honour & glory excites him to establish & preserve this kingdom of justice & judgment under Christ, & not any consideration of the desert of man. The practice of justice, the decisions of equal judgment, the culture of mercy & benevolence, are agreeable to his nature. ~~He hath therefore taken~~ all care that they may be regarded by his reasonable creatures. To this end he instituted his Church or kingdom in the world under the government of his Son, & hath put it under the most exact & equitable laws, for the regulation of the members of it, that he might always have a people in it called by his name, obedient to his will, heirs of his promises, & fit inheritors of his heavenly kingdom.

When God threatned the Jews with destruction from the Babylonians, he promised that a remnant should escape out of Jerusalem, those namely whom his mercy favoured; & that they should again take root, & grow, & increase. The zeal of the Lord of hosts shall do this, said the prophet (Isa. XXXVII. 32) That is; a regard for his honour, & for the glory of his name; that his Church might continue, & a people be preserved to worship & obey him, & not the merit of that remnant were the reason of its salvation.

In this sense also the redemption of the world is always ascribed to the free grace & mercy of God — to his zeal, & not to the desert of men. Hear the testimony of St. Paul to this point. *We are justified freely by his grace, thro the redemption that is in Jesus Christ* (Rom. III. 24) Again, *By grace are ye saved; through faith; & that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God* (Eph. II. 8) And again, God *hath saved us*, that is, hath put us in a state of salvation, *& called us with a holy calling* to the knowledge & profession of his holy religion, to be a people holy to himself; *not according to our works* which we had formerly done, as though there was any merit in us, on account of which we were called & put into a state of salvation under the Gospel; *but of his own purpose & grace*, *which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began* (2 Tim. I. 9)

We have now briefly considered the terms uſed cussed in the text, I have established the doctrines contained in them by proofs from other parts of holy scripture; having shewn that the government or kingdom of Christ shall have no end: That he shall exercise his government on the throne of David, being himself the mystical David, the only & well beloved Son of God; according to his humanity, the real & literal descendent of David whom God, in a wonderful manner, placed on the throne of Judah, & to whose family he promised perpetual succession on that throne: That this throne shall be ordered & established by him in judgment & justice forever: That not the worthiness of men, but the zeal of God for his own glory, & his free grace & mercy to men, *hath done this*, which he promised by the mouth of his holy prophets.

It now remains for us to consider what conduct on our part the doctrines of the text require.

The first return we ought to make is that of gratitude & love to our God & Saviour for the inestimable blessing of our redemption. Greatly is our obligation to gratitude increased by the manner in which this blessing hath been conferred on us. Not our worthiness, nor the merit of any thing we had done, but the real, the free grace & mercy of God provided this salvation for us. God, who knoweth all things, knew, from the beginning, the unhappy state of sin & misery into which human nature would fall, & he determined & prepared their redemption, even before the world began. Not their works then for they had done neither good nor evil — not their worthiness for they were not yet in being, but the good will & mercy of God moved him to this act of benignity. This benign purpose he continued & carried into effect, notwithstanding the perversity of nature they incurred by renouncing the state of their creation, & the many & aggrevated crimes they daily committed.

Love, gratitude, praise the most ardent & devout are therefore due to him from every descendant of fallen Adam. Where these take place, they will shew themselves in faith & trust in God, & in obedience & resignation to him.

A belief therefore of all his promises, a confidence of receiving from him every thing we want, which is proper for us, will be the natural fruit of our faith. For the effect of faith in the truth & power of God, is trust & dependence on him, & fear of loosing his favour by offending him; of faith in the wisdom & goodness of God, ~~submission~~ & resignation to him. Where these have no place, faith hath no being. The simple belief of the existence of God is not the faith which the Gospel requires. The devils believe, saith St. James; he saith also that they tremble. They tremble at his power & justice, because they have no faith in his mercy & goodness.

The second thing I have to observe is, that the doctrines contained in the text require us to live in the constant practice of that justice & judgment with which the throne of David is ordered & established under King Messiah.

If his throne is established in justice & judgment, the subjects of that throne must be under obligations to practice justice & equity in all their intercourse with each other. For where these are the rule of conduct to the lawgiver, they must be made the rule of conduct to all those who are subject to his laws. No otherwise can the end of his government be answered, because no otherwise can his subjects be rendered like him in temper & disposition, & become capable of receiving happiness from him, who is the only source of happiness to all his creatures.

If we look to that holy religion which he hath instituted, to the profession of which his goodness hath called us, we shall find it abounding in commands which enforce the practice of justice, & truth, & peace, & love, & goodwill, & good works to all with whom we are concerned — with directions for the proper performance of these duties; with exhortations, promises & threats to enforce them on us; with declarations of the happy effect of fulfilling them, & the dreadful consequences of neglecting them; & with the promise of all necessary aid from the Holy Spirit to enable us to fulfil them.

To all this is added the certain notice, that when the scene of this world shall be closed, God will call the earth to judgment before Christ, to whom all power is now committed, & who is appointed the final judge of all men. Then shall every man give account of himself to God, & shall receive his portion in eternity, according as he hath lived in obedience or oppoſition to God.

These are serious conſiderations, & ought to convince you of the neceſsity of ſubmitting yourselves now to that government of Christ under which Gods goodneſs hath placed you; of obeying thoſe laws & fulfilling thoſe commands & directions which he hath given you, because by him you shall be judged; & the laws he hath given will be the rule by which his judgment shall proceed. If from the heart you obey him, according to the best of your power, truly repenting of all your sins & evil deeds, & trusting in his merit & mercy, you shall live, in this world, in his peace, who is the prince of peace, & in his favour in eternity, to whom all power in heaven & earth is given, Jesus Christ, our Mediator & Advocate. Amen.

Setauket & Islip — 13 Δ 1817

Sermon the sixth

The only Saviour.

Circumcision, 1794. 795.

Coloſs. II. 13, 14.

And you being dead in your sins, & the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven all your treſpaſses, blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, & took it out of the way, nailing it to his croſs.

The good providence of almighty God hath brought us to the beginning of another year, & I hope & pray God it may be a happy & prosperous one to all of you. That it may be so with regard to your spiritual concerns it is your duty to reflect on your past lives, & to see whether you have paſsed them according to the will of God made known to you. If you have, to thank him for his grace & goodness ~~to you~~, & to beseech him to continue them to you. If you have not, to humble yourselves before him, & implore his merciful forgiveness; to examine attentively from what root your evil deeds have sprung, & to endeavour by Gods help to correct it; that amending your lives according to his will, you may live in obedience to him, & when this life is ended may obtain through Christ that life which is everlasting.

To assist you in this business I have redde a remarkable passage from St. Paul to you, full of information & comfort. My duty is to explain it to you, that you may see what Christ hath done for you. From hence a view of your duty will arise, & your obligations to do it will be so evident, that, I trust, they will have their full effect on you all.

The former part of his epistle is employed by

St. Paul in thanks to God for the conversion of the Colloſsians to Christianity, in prayer for the increase of their faith & hope, & in describing the true Mediator between God & man to them. He next exhorts them to constancy & perseverance in the faith of Christ, not to be drawn from the purity & simplicity of his Gospel, by the philosophy & metaphysics of the heathen Gentiles on the one hand, nor by the ostentatious traditions & declarations of the Jews on the other. But to hold fast by Christ, *In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom & knowledge* — *Rooted & built up in him, & stablished in the faith* *as*, saith the holy apostle, *ye have been taught*.

He then adverts to the folly of departing from Christ, & giving up the christian profeſsion & life; because *in Christ dwelleth all the fulneſs of the Godhead bodily*. *And ye are complete*, saith he, *in him, who is the head of all principality & power*. By departing from him & going to another Saviour, or to another mode of ſalvation, there was therefore nothing for them to gain, because there was none greater, or more able & willing to help them. And,

Little need was there of returning to Judaism, or of entering into the covenant made with Abraham by circumcision, because they had, in truth, been all circumcised already, with the circumcision made without hands, & which consisted in putting off the body of the ſins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ, having been buried ~~been buried~~ with him in baptism, & thereby entered into covenant with God.

And not only so; but they were also risen with Christ through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you being dead in your ſins, & the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all treſpaſses, blotting

out the hand-writing of ordinances, that was against us, which was contrary to us, & took it out of the way, nailing it to his croſs. — 'And you, who, while
'you were Gentiles, were dead in your ſins, & out of cove-
'nant with God, hath he quickened together with
'Christ by his Spirit whom he hath given you —
'hath taken you into covenant with himself, thro'
'your faith in Christ, & forgiven you freely all your
'past treſpaſses — having cancelled all legal or-
'dinances, which were against us, a burden too
'heavy for us to bear; removing them so effectually
'that he hath utterly taken them away & diſsolv-
'ed their obligation, by dying on the croſs for us.

The first thing obſervable in the text is the state in which the apostle represents all men to be by nature, that is without the interposition of Christ, namely *dead* in their sins, & in the uncircumciſion of their flesh, that is, living in ſin, & out of covenant with God.

In other places of scripture is the same thing affirmed.

You hath he quickened, saith this ſame apostle to the Epheſians, *who were dead in treſpaſses & ſins*. Again in the same chapter, *Even when we were dead in ſins, hath he quickened us together with Christ* (Eph. II. 1, 5)

In the scripture, the works of ſin & wickedneſs are called *dead works*. (Heb. VI. 1. IX. 14) They who repent of their ſins & turn to God in obedience of life; especially they who have by baptism been buried with Christ, &, by the power of God, have risen from the death of sin to the life of holineſs, & continue in it, are said to be *dead to sin* (Rom. VI. 2)

In these cases *death* cannot mean, *ceasing to exist*, but the ceasing of a certain life, or mod of existing, & getting another different from it. The threating of God against the disobedience of Adam respecting the forbidden tree, was no doubt executed at the very time in which he ſinned. But Adam did not cease to be. The divine life in which he was created ceased; to *that* he became dead; & another life, the life of this world, a life of contrariety & enmity against God, arose in him. This was his fall. They who live the life into which he fell, are dead to the life in which God created man — are dead in trespasses & sins. And this the apostle representeth to be the natural state of all men descended from Adam. In him they all died & became children of wrath.

The design of redemption is to recover man from that death into which he is fallen, & to renew in him that divine life which he lost, a life of obedience to God, under the conduct & operation of his Spirit.

The first step taken by infinite wisdom with respect to man, & in which he was to act a part, was the institution of sacrifices & the patriarchal religion — requiring repentance for sin, a good life, & faith in the Mediator who was to sacrifice his life for them.

This religion continued till, idolatry overspreading the world, God established his covenant with Abraham, & appointed circumcision to be the rite of initiation into it. Circumcision ſignified the cutting off of the ſins of the flesh; & the covenant required faith in God, that is obedience to all his commands. Sacrifices made a great part of this religion. By them atonement was made for the ſins of thoſe who were under that covenant, & by them their gratitude to God for his mercies was expreſsed; both ~~of them~~ theſe ends were attained by virtue of the allſufficient ſacrifice for the ſins of the world by Jesus Christ, of which the legal ſacrifices were the types & figures.

They who were uncircumcised, as were all the Gentiles, are supposed by St. Paul to be under the dominion of the ſins of the flesh, without Christ, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers from the covenant of promise, having no hope, & without God in the world (Eph. II. 11, 12)

For this reason those people, while they continued

Gentiles, are said to be dead in the uncircumcision of their flesh, as well as in their ſins: And when they became Christians, that God had quickened them with Christ by his Spirit, having, in the regeneration of holy baptism, forgiven them all their former treſpaſses. For,

To perfect the redemption of man, the Redeemer Jesus came into the world, & did & suffered all that God required; making thereby atonement for sin, & procuring the Holy Spirit to be again in man, as he was at his creation. Faith in him as the Mediator between God & man, & the atonement for sin, & repentance, that is the forsaking sin, so as no longer to live in the habits of it, are what are required on our part, to render us capable of this ſalvation. And to produce & continue faith & repentance in us is the office of the Holy Ghost, the end for which he is given. This work he will do, unleſs we resist, & grieve, & drive him away.

This faith & repentance are, in adults, the requisite conditions of baptism, the sacrament of initiation into the Church of Christ, the circumcision of Christ made without hands, the seal of regeneration. *Being buried with him in baptism, they put off the body of the sins of the flesh*; that is they renounce them so as no longer to live in them.

In baptism also they rise with Christ to a new life, *through the faith of the operation of God, who raised Jesus from the dead*; by which faith we believe he will also raise us, not only from the grave, but from the death of sin, by the forgiveness of all our past transgressions.

These are they who are dead to sin, & alive to God through Jesus Christ; being *quickened*, made to live, *together* with Christ, by his Spirit, in the imitation of his holiness, & in certain hope of eternal life through him. With them old things, sin, with all its horrid consequences, are done away; all things, their life, their fears, their hopes, their joys are become new.

Not only so; Christ hath blotted out the handwriting of legal ordinances, that was against them, which was contrary to them, & hath taken it out of the way, nailing it to his cross.

The word translated ordinances — δόγμα — signifies a Royal or sovereign decree; & is thence taken to express ritual prescriptions in religion. What in the text is called the hand-writing of ordinances, is in Eph. II. 15, called the law of commandments contained in ordinances; that is in the ceremonial law of the Jews. That law is said to be against the Gentiles & contrary to them, because it formed that middle wall of partition which made them aliens from the covenant of God, & put enmity between them & his people.

This middle wall of partition Christ is said to have broken down, & in his flesh to have abolished the enmity of it, that is, by submitting to the law of Moses & fulfiling it, & making that atonement for sin which had required it, he abolished & dissolved its obligation, & took it quite away; admitting the Gentiles without it, to be fellow heirs with the Jews of all the promises & blessings of the Gospel.

(There is another sense in which the Mosaic law may be said to have been contrary to & against the Gentiles; a sense in which it was contrary to the Jews also; namely, as it was the ministration of death & condemnation (2 Cor. III. 7, 9) It not only denounced death for several transgressions without appointing any sacrifice of expiation, but the very promulgation of it at mount Sinai was with such awful majesty as made the people exceedingly to tremble & fear. To such a height were their apprehensions raised, that they declared they could no longer endure the dreadful glory of God which burned on the mountain, nor the awful thunders in which he spake to them. The brightness of the face of Moses, when he came the second time down from the mountain, was the source of terror to them— they dared not to approach near him, till he had covered his face with a vail.

It appeared right & good to God, that in the delivery of the law which was to display his justice & indignation against sin—in the apostles phrase, to make it *appear exceeding sinful*; its mediator, & its promulgation should be attended with dread majesty & glory.

But the Mediator, & the promulgation of the Gospel, though accompanied with the demonstration of the Spirit & of power, yet was mild & merciful. Not the fear of death was impressed on any one by the Gospel, but the joyful hope that it would open to us that life & immortality which it brought fully to light, which it proclaimed to the world, & taught men how to attain. It took us out from under the rigid government of unsinning obedience, of ritual ordinances, & ceremonious observations, & brought us into the perfect liberty of the sons of God, by making our sincere & hearty obedience, though imperfect throught the weakness of our nature, acceptable to him through the Mediator, instead of obedience which was perfectly unsinning.)

By attending to what the apostle hath said in the text & the discourse from which it is taken, it will appear that Christ hath abolished & taken away circumcision, & the whole ceremonial law of Moses; so that no obligation to observe them can lie on Christians. But the spiritual meaning of circumcision & of the ceremonial law, he hath not taken away. On the contrary, hath more strongly enforced the holiness of heart & purity of life, which they required, on his followers, by that holy baptism in the name of the ever bleſsed Trinity, which he hath appointed to be the sacrament of initiation into his Church, instead of circumcision. In baptism they who were dead in their ſins, are quickened & raised up to a new & holy life, by the operation of the Holy Ghost; their past offences are forgiven to them, & the law of unsinning obedience is abrogated & taken out of their way.

The same authority which establisheth any positive institution, can abolish & take away its obligation, whenever it is thought proper to do so. Circumcision, & the law of Moses, were designed to answer particular purposes, to point out Christ the Mediator, to figure forth the atonement he was to make for ſin, to shew the holineſs & purity of life & heart which he required, & to intimate that remiſsion of ſins which is to be obtained in the holy baptism of his Church.

They served as a ſchool-master to bring those who were under them to Christ, & were shadows & prefigurations of good things to come through him — the introduction of a better hope than any they could give.

But when Christ was come, thoſe shadows & figures became useleſs, because he was their substance & reality. He brought & procured for us all thoſe good things of which they were the shadows. He made known that better hope, of which they were the prefigurations, & he made all who believe in him, partakers of that hope, the hope of ſeeing God in glory through him.

As all these prefigurations related to Christ, & were fulfilled & abolished by him who had originally instituted them; & as he perfected their fulfilment when he died on the croſs, he is ſaid to have taken them away by nailing them to his croſs, where, being fulfilled, they expired, &

ceased, & lost their force forever.

It also appears from St. Pauls discourse, that baptism hath, by the authority of Christ, succeeded in the room of circumcision, as the sacrament of admission into his Church. Not only adults, therefore, have a right to this sacrament upon their repentance & faith, but infants also must have the same right, upon the faith of their parents, or sureties, presenting them to baptism, & requesting it for them. On other ground we destroy the analogy between circumcision & baptism, as the sacraments of initiation into the Church of God: Or else we suppose that God shewed more love & greater kindness to the children of the Jewish Church formerly, than he doth to the children of the Christian Church now.

By the circumcision made without hands, the apostle evidently means the spiritual circumcision made in baptism — the putting off of the sins of the flesh. He can not mean the personal circumcision of Christ, for that was made with hands; but must intend that baptism which Christ hath ordained to supply the place of it.

Baptism therefore is the sacrament of admission into the Christian Church, as circumcision was into the Jewish Church. For it is our having received spiritual circumcision in baptism, by which the apostle proves that we have no need of the external circumcision of the flesh made with hands, which was only a figure of the putting off of the sins of the flesh in Christian baptism.

The children of Christians therefore have as good a title to Christian baptism, as the children of Jews had to Jewish circumcision: Or else there is no federal rite by which they can be admitted into the Church of God; but are *without Christ, aliens from the common-wealth of Israel, strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope,*

&

& without God in the world (Eph II. 12)

The neceſsity of baptism having been ſhewed, I have to remark that the validity of the ſacrament depends on three particulars. 1. The *matter*, which is *water*. 2. The *form*, that it be done *in the name of the Father, & of the Son, & of the Holy Ghost*. 3. *The authority of the administrator*, that he be a person authorised to act in the name of God, & to ſeal his covenant.

The command to baptise implies the *water*; for to *baptise* is to wash, or purify with water. With water the Jews baptised their proselytes. With water the apostles baptised their converts, as appears from the frequent mention of water in baptism, in their Acts & Epistles. The *form*, or words with which baptism is to be administred are expreſsly commanded by Christ. The *authority* of the administrator depends on his commiſsion from Christ. His commiſsion ~~he~~ Christ gave to none but to his apostles; for when he gave it, none others were present.

None therefore but they who derive their authority from the apostles can validly administer the holy sacrament of baptism.

Of eſsential importance is it to adults, that they present themselves to baptism with that penitence & faith which God requires — to children that they be duly instructed in them, as soon as their capacity shall enable them to understand them; & that they be also taught to observe all things whatsoever Christ hath commanded.

This brings to our consideration the neceſsity of continuing that holy life which baptism requires, as long as we live.

It would be easy to shew that circumcision implied the cutting off, that is mortifying & restraining sinful deſires, & paſsions, & appetites. And St. Paul saith that baptism, which he calls the circumcision of Christ — the circumcision made without hands — implies the putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, & the rising to newneſs of life; that is, dying to sin, & rising to holineſs.

The ceasing of the life of sin, & the beginning of the life of holineſs, is properly regeneration: And therefore the Church teacheth regeneration in baptism; that is, that baptism is the beginning of a new, holy, & heavenly life in the Church of God, into which we are thereby taken, entered into covenant with him, & put under the guidance of the Holy Ghost.

To this state remiſsion of sins is promised; & therefore the Church teacheth remiſsion of sins in baptism; & is supported in doing so, by St. Peters ſermon to the Jews, *Repent, & be baptised every one of you, in the name of J. Christ, for the remiſsion of sins* (Acts II. 38)

Neither regeneration, nor remiſsion of sins can take place, but by the operation of the Holy Ghost; And therefore the Church teacheth that the Holy Ghost is given in baptism; & is warranted to do so by the above cited text from St. Peter, *Repent* &c: *& ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost*.

And because persons in covenant with God, are his children, & heirs of his promises, therefore the Church teacheth that in baptism we are made members of Christ, children of God, & heirs of the kingdom of heaven.

These characters it is necessary for the baptised person to retain & support, according to that new life which began in his baptism, according to the inspirations of that Holy Spirit which he then received, according to the principles & doctrines of that holy religion which he then professed, & according to the government & discipline of Christs Church of which he was then admitted a member. If he do so, he shall at the end of the world, hear the joyful acquittal of his judge, & enter triumphantly with him, into the heavenly kingdom of God.

If he pollute his baptism, & live inconsistant with the happy privileges with which he is invested, he will lose the favour of God, & forfeit his title to the inheritance of the Saints. The grace of repentance his merciful God hath provided for his recovery. If this be duly exercised, it will restore him to the favour of God, thro' the mediation of Jesus.

Amen.

9 Δ/95 Setauket 1817

Sermon the seventh.

The equity of Gods dealing with the wise and prudent, & with babes in Christ.

Quinquagesima Sunday, 1788. 1794.

Matt. XI. 25, 26.

I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven & earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise & prudent, & hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.

If we attend to the preceeding part of the chapter, it will be no difficult matter to determine what those things were, which Jesus said, were hid from the wise & prudent, but revealed unto babes: nor who those wise & prudent, & babes were, to whom the text relates.

Jesus came in the character, & with all the marks & tokens which the prophets had given of Messiah, & at the very time when Messiah was eagerly expected by the body of the jewish nation. But they, looking for a temporal Messiah, who should be a mighty conqueror, subject the nations to their dominion, & make them Lords of the earth, were disgusted at his mean appearance. They could not bear that their exalted expectations should rest on the son of a poor carpenter, without family, without connections, without resources to support him in the grand enterprise which they hoped Messiah would accomplish.

He spoke to them the words of eternal life, & proclaimed those doctrines, by which alone man can be reconciled to God & obtain his favour, & they believed him not. He did such miracles among them as none before him ever had done, such as none could do but by divine power, & they received him not, but ascribed his miracles to Beelzebub. His forerunner prepared his way by calling men to repentance for their past sins, & to the denial of their sensual lusts & appetites, &, in his own person, set them the example of that mortification which he preached to others, being roughtly clothed, & coarsly fed; & they rejected him as a hypochondriacal madman. Jesus observed no open & set form of austerity in his living: He ate & drank the common food, & freely received & conversed with all who came to him. They who had reviled John for his austerity, reviled Jesus for his free living; called him glutton, drunkard, a loose, debauched person, & a companion of those who were so.

These are the things of which Jesus complains— that the rulers, & great, & wise, & learned men— the

Priests, & Scribes, & Pharisees, & bulk of the nation would not perceive him to be Meſsiah whom God had promised, & the prophets foretold should come — would neither believe his doctrines, nor be convinced by his miracles.

These were the things that were hid from the wise & prudent, from the Priests, & Scribes, & Lawyers, & Doctors, who, by their stations & profeſsions, ought to have been *wise* & *prudent* in the true sense of those words.

These men however were only wise & prudent in their own conceits. They mistook cunning for wisdom, & craft for prudence; & under that mistake, they became vain & arrogant; & incapable of being taught, because they supposed themselves ignorant of nothing.

When Jesus thanked God that he had hid these things from the wise & prudent, we are not to ſuppose that any force was exerted by almighty God over the minds of those people, to make them indisposed to attend to the things which concerned their salvation, or incapable of understanding them. Every consideration forbids us to imagine that God ever did force the understanding or will to conceive or do that which was wrong, either by decree, or power, or by motive to evil.

If we attend carefully to the accounts given us of those men, who in the text, are called wise & prudent, we shall be convinced that they had rendered themselves indisposed to receive the knowledge of divine things, by their worldly attachments, & incapable of imbibing the wisdom which is from above, by their conceit of their own wisdom & prudence, which were, in truth, but cunning & subtilty. This being their case; if they were permitted to go on in their own way, till their self-conceit & worldly minds had led them to reject Jesus & his doctrines, because they were not agreable to their inclinations & prejudices, Gods justice & goodneſs stands unimpeached: He could do nothing to prevent it, without employing force, which is inconsistent with the nature of reasonable & voluntary agents. And,

This is the full meaning of those expreſsions in the scripture which represent God as shutting the eyes, closing their eyes, & hardening the hearts of wicked men. They are proverbial phraſes, & imply these two things;

1. That perverseneſs & obstinacy will convert the means of information & amendment which God graciously affords, into occasions of impenitency & hardneſs of heart.

The miracles, for instance, wrought by Moses in Egypt, were intended to convince Pharaoh, that the God of the Israelites was the God of all nature, the creator & governor of all things; that it was his duty to submit himself to this God, & obey his command to dismiss his people from their servitude under him. Yet, instead of bringing Pharaoh to the sense & practice of his duty, they hardened his heart, & confirmed his impious opposition to God. God is therefore said to have hardened his heart, because Pharaoh converted all the means of conviction into occasions of greater & more obstinate impenitency.

2. The second thing these phrases imply, is the certainty that the thing is done—the eyes shut, the ears closed, the heart hardened—& the greatness of the degree in which it is done.

To continue the instance of Pharaoh. His heart was as surely, as certainly, as effectually hardened by his own perverseness & obstinacy, as though the power of God had been directly exerted to harden it. In the same manner, the vain conceit of their own wisdom & prudence; their unreasonable prejudices, & worldly attachments, as surely, & as effectually hindered the great & learned men among the Jews from perceiving the true character of Messiah in Jesus of Nazareth, from admitting his heavenly doctrines, & acknowledging the divine attestation of his miracles, as though God had by his power hid them from their eyes.

When God hath laid all reasonable arguments & motives of conviction before men, & hath added the influences of his Spirit to excite them to attend to them, & be convinced by them, he hath done all that can be done consistently with the reasonable nature of man.

Suppoſe him to proceed further, & to over-rule the will & inclinations — make him believe against his will, or make him holy against his inclination — what, I beseech you becomes of the reasonable nature of man? It is gone; & man is no longer that rational, intelligent, free, moral agent, which we all find ourselves to be; & can have no more relation to virtue or vice, ſin or holineſs than a paltry machine.

Nor will the matter be mended, if inſtead of over-ruling the will & inclinations, we suppoſe God to take them away & to give a new will & new inclinations. This I confeſs shifts the ground but it removes not the objection. The man becomes indeed a different man from what he was before; but if it be done by force, without his own concurrence, he becomes another being, as distinct from his former being or ſelf, as any two men can be from each other. [Men may differ in their external appearance, in their mental abilities, but their difference as moral agents lies intirely in their will & inclinations — say in their affections, desires, tempers, paſsions, the odds is nothing. A man may be induced to restrain or give up his own will & inclinations, through fear, hope, love; but if his will be taken away from him, & he act from necessity, not from choice, & he is no more capable of doing good or evil, morally speaking, that is of committing sin or practising holineſs; & no more accountable, in a moral sense, than an idiot or a horse.]

Nor doth this doctrine contradict what is said in the Scripture of Gods giving us a new will, a clean heart, a heart of flesh &c.

All such expressions prove that we can do nothing towards the correction of our own wills & affections without the grace & inspiration of the Almighty. In him we live, & move, & have our being; And there is none good but he alone. He must therefore be the origine & fountain of every thing that is good, not only in its progress & end, but in its origine also: And as every thing that is good cometh from him alone, it will be finally accepted & rewarded by him.

But the same scriptures deliver us this command of God by his prophet Isaiah (I. 16) "Wash ye, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings, cease to do evil, learn to do "well" &c: And by Ezekiel (XVIII. 31) "Cast away from you all your transgressions, & "make you a new heart, & a new spirit; for "why will ye die, O house of Israel? Wherefore "turn & live ye". This is surely intimation enough to us, that God doth not operate irresistably in us, but according to that free will & intelligent nature which we have.

The same consequence will follow from the frequent & earnest exhortations in the New-Testament, not to resist, not to grieve, not to quench the Holy Spirit. Those expressions prove that the Holy Spirit is ever operating & striving in us, inspiring our hearts with good desires & exciting us to bring them to good effect. They prove also that his operations in us may be quenched, that is rejected & frustrated by us.

The common opinion therefore of the irresistability of Gods grace, that is, of the operations of his Spirit in us, is not drawn from holy scripture, but probably took its rise from the metaphysics of the schoolmen. It is a doctrine which leads directly to neceſsity; & though you soften the matter by placing a number of motives between it & the agent, it is neceſsity still, & will continue so forever.

It is said of God, that he resisteth the proud, & giveth grace to the humble. I see no good reason why this may not be literally understood. The proud ever resist God, & by their vain conceits, & arrogant tempers render themselves incapable of the operations of his Spirit on their minds. And why he should continue the influences of his Spirit to persons who have rendered themselves incapable of profiting by them, no good reason can be given.

This will lead us to the meaning of the expreſsion in the latter part of the text, "Even
v.10, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight,"
that is, It appeared right & good in the
sight

sight of God, to leave the worldly wise & prudent, the vain, conceited, arrogant, & proud among the Jews, who had shut their eyes, & closed their ears, & hardened their hearts against the truth, to the consequences of their own perverseness; & to bless with his grace & Holy Spirit, the humble & ~~modest~~ meek; those who were lowly & modest, & free from the worldly attachments & prejudices which shut out the light of truth from the mind.]

These, in the text are called *babes*, because of their teachable, disinterested disposition. And in this sense is to be understood what Jesus said to his disciples on another occasion, when their vanity, & worldly tempers, & prejudices, made them contend who should be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. "Except ye be converted, & become as little "children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. XVIII. 3) Except ye give up your worldly expectations, & get rid of your vain & aspiring tempers, & become open, honest, & unprejudiced like little children, ready to hear my instructions, to receive my doctrines, & to obey my directions, ye can have no part in my kingdom; much less be the greatest in it.

There remains one difficulty in the text, & that is to account for Christs mode of speech. According to the common meaning of our language, Jesus thanks God because he had hid those things from the wise & prudent, as well as for revealing them to the humble & meek.

It is confessed that the translators of the bible have literally rendered the Greek words; And yet the Greek text hath a different meaning from our translation, owing to the different

ent idioms, or modes of expreſsion in the two languages. The subject of the thanksgiving of Jesus to the Father is not that he had hid the doctrines of salvation through Christ from the wise & prudent, but that he had revealed them to babes. And the rendering, I apprehend, would have been better, had it been, "I thank thee, "O Father, Lord of heaven & earth, that though "thou hast hid these things" — though these things are hidden "from the wise & prudent, yet thou "hast revealed them to babes".

There is exactly a similar construction in Rom. VI. 17. "God be thanked, that ye were the "servants of sin; but ye have obeyed from the "heart that form of doctrine which was delivered "you", or more properly, "to which ye were delivered, —"under which ye were placed, ἐις ὃν παρεδόθητε. The ground of the apostles thanksgiving certainly was not that the Romans had been sinners, but that being sinners, the servants of sin, they had repented of their sins, had received, & from the heart obeyed that form of doctrine, the Gospel of Christ, under which the mercy of God had placed them.

(How these passages came to be thus rendered is hard to say, unless it was in deference to the authority of Mr. Calvin who had zealously propagated the doctrine of absolute decrees of election & reprobation, & thereby tinctured the divinity of almost all the reformed Churches. It had been the doctrine of the Church of Rome ever since the time of St. Augustine, & continues to be so to this day. By Mr Calvins assistance it was enabled to keep its hold among those who departed from the errors of Rome, & hath, at different times, been the occasion of much perplexity & confusion among them)

Having cleared the way by explaining & fixing the meaning of the text, I will endeavour to ex-

preſs it in our common language. 'I thank thee, O
'Father, the Lord of heaven & earth, that tho' the great &
'learned, the worldly wise & prudent men of this nation,
'have, by their pride & vanity, & prejudices, & attachment
'to worldly interests, rendered themselves incapable
'of receiving one or my doctrines, or of acknowleging
'the testimony of the works thou gavest me to
'do, yet my coming is not in vain, ſeeing there are
'ſome meek & humble souls, who being free from
'the pride of learning & knowledge, from the prejudice
'of interest & worldly attachments, do, with the
'honest simplicity of little children, give themſelves
'up to the direction of that heavenly wisdom, that
'divine grace thou has, by me, revealed to the world.
'Even so Father it ſeemed good to thee, whose property
'is always to neglect the proud, & bestow thy grace
'& Holy Spirit on the humble & meek.

with the wise & prudent.

Part the second.

There are several useful leſsons to be drawn from the text, according to the explanation I have given of it. And as all scripture is intended for our instruction & admonition in faith & practice, & the design of preaching being not only to inform the understanding & judgment, but to perſuade the will, & engage the affections to embrace the truth, & live according to it, I hope for your candid attention while I lay before you ſuch observations on the text as may tend to your improvement in Christian knowledge & practice.

I. It appears that God hardeneth no man in ſin, nor exerteth any power over him to prevent his ſeeing & obeying the truth when it is ~~fairly~~ proposed to him. To ſuppoſe he doth, is indirectly to charge all the ſin the man commits under ſuch hardneſs, to God himself, as its primary author.

thor. For on that supposition the man becomes a neceſsary agent without will or choice of his own, & only acts under a neceſsity imposed on him by a superior power, & agreeably to such motives as neceſsarily oblege to act as he doth.

All the blindneſs & hardneſs of heart that comes from God, must, therefore, be his permitting men to pursue, or his not interposing his power to prevent their pursuing, that freedom of will & choice, which makes them to be men, & without which their nature would cease to be what it is.

And the phrases of Gods giving men up to a reprobate mind, to work all uncleanneſs with greedineſs, to fill up the measure of their iniquity, can mean no more than his permitting them to pursue the consequences of their own choice, to follow the impulse of those tempers, & paſsions, & lusts, which their own free will first induced them to indulge, & which habit hath rendered too strong for them to control. Whatever height of wickedness they shall come to, it is all their own acquiring; no part of it is to be charged to God, unless you make it a charge against him that he continued them in life while they were working iniquity; or that he did not interpose his almighty power to over-rule their will, & choice, & all the faculties of the mind which distinguish the reasonable nature of man.

The consequences too of this conduct, be they what they may, they must undergo; in the language of the scripture, they must reap the fruit of their own ways.

Nor does this bring any imputation on the justice or goodness, or love, or mercy of God. He hath done all for them that justice, & goodness, & mercy, & love could do, consistently with their nature. Nor do I see how his almighty power & infinite goodness can prevent their living, that is, their continuing

ing in that state, be it ever so miserable, which they have formed for themselves, unless he new make the present nature of things, & give another nature, with different, nay opposite tendencies & consequences.

A consideration ariseth from hence which most nearly concerns us, & ought deeply to affect & influence our conduct. And I earnestly beg you would attend to it, not only now while you are at Church, but through your whole lives. It is the danger, I mean, of indulging & living in those tempers, & passions, & lusts which God hath forbidden, lest they get the ascendency over you, & lead you into that reprobate state of wickedness, from which there seems to be so little chance of recovery.

You think perhaps you can leave your sins, & reform the course of your lives when you please; & that when you have indulged yourselves a little longer you will do so. In this imagination you are mistaken. You cannot repent & amend, unless God by his Spirit enable you to do so. Try your own strength when you please, & as often as you please, & it will fail you.

Now the longer you continue in sinful habits, or in the habit of careless indifference about religion, the stronger will those habits become, the harder will it be for you to break loose from them. The longer you have resisted & stifled the motions & inspirations of Gods Spirit in you, shewing itself in good desires & holy purposes, the more difficult will it be for you to perceive or follow them. For,

II. It appears from what hath been said on the text, that wicked men, men who regard not religious principles, harden their own hearts, blind their own understandings, & stupify their consciences, by the indulgence of their pride, by the vain conceit of their abilities, & wisdom, & knowledge, by the immoderate gratification of their passions & appetites, & by their attachment to ambitious views, worldly interests & bodily pleasures. This position may easily be supported by comparing these particulars with the characters & conduct of those persons who in the text are denominated wise & prudent.

There are some particulars mentioned in the New Testament, which prove the greatness of their pride. I shall take notice only of two. One is that they demanded that the highest honour should be paid to their persons; insisting upon being addressed with their titles of distinction, Rabbi, Master, & upon being accomodated with the highest seat in the Synagogue, & at entertainments: not as a matter of courtesy, but as a point due to their superior merit.

super. The other is more particularly noted by those authors who have given us an account of them, & plainly intimated by the Evangelists: namely, that they declined to hold any conversation with the common people, lest they should lessen their dignity, or their sanctity should be defiled. And if they, on any occasion, were obliged to hold any intercourse with them, or went into the market where they could not help meeting with them, they always washed their hands when they came home, supposing they were thereby cleansed from any pollution they might have contracted.

The nice & intricate expositions they gave of the precepts of the law, & the captious questions they frequently put to Jesus concerning the law & their traditions sufficiently shew the high estimation in which they held their own knowledge

&

& wisdom. Should any doubt remain only advert to the arrogant queries they put to the officers whom they sent to apprehend Jesus, who not only returned without him, but spoke of him in terms of admiration; "Are ye also deceived? "have any of the rulers, or of the Pharisees believed on him? But this people who knoweth not "the law are cursed (Jo. VII. 47, 48, 49)

Their ungoverned passions appear from the rancour & malice with which they persecuted the meek & humble Saviour of men; their hycrisy from their making long prayers in the corners of the streets, to be seen of men; their covetousness from their devouring the substance of the widow; their ambitious views from their lording it over the people, & obliging them to pay homage & court to them; and both their ambition & worldly attachments from their rejecting

Christ on account of the poverty of his family, & the low estate in which he appeard. Now, How is it possible that the hearts of such people should not be hardened? To come to this state they must have resisted all the dictates of humanity, all the principles of conscience, all the admonitions of Gods word & providence, & all the motions & insperations of his grace & Holy Spirit.

To suppose that this state came on them because God had hid the things that belonged to their peace from them, & that otherwise they never would have fallen into it, is a thought which ought never to enter a Christians heart; & is directly contradicted by the birth & life of the holy Jesus among them.

To suppose that the same neglect of God, & of good principles, & the same indulgence of passion & appetite in us, will not produce the same fatal effects that they produced in the wise & prudent among the Jews; is a fallacious supposition. It is grounded on no better reasons than those which influence the common drunkard. He sees that a long course of repeated intoxications hath ruined & killed all that have fallen into it before him. Yet he flatters himself that he may safely indulge his appetite, till the loss of reputation, of health, & at last, of life itself exact the penalty of his intoxication from him.

Human nature is the same in all ages & countries; & the indulgence of the same passion & tempers in the same degree, will forever produce the same effects. Be their example our warning; & as we wish to escape their state, be careful how we indulge the tempers, passions, & prejudices which brought them into it.

III. The third observation I have to make, relates to the difficulty which will embarraſs people who having fallen into this state, wish to recover from it, & come to a better mind. This point hath indeed been already mentioned; but it may the more effectually guard us against it, if we consider a little more fully the difficulties attending on it.

The indulgence of the tempers of which we have been discoursing, renders men, by long continuance, so incapable of perceiving or pursuing what is right, that it amounts nearly to the same impoſsibility with the Ethiopians changing his ſkin, or the leopard his spots, for then only, according to the prophet, may they do good, who are accustomed to do evil (Jer. XIII. 23)

Take then any one of the above tempers, & suppose a man to have indulged it so long as to be under the full power of it, & you must, at a single view, perceive that it is a dead bar to every improvement of the mind, & to all virtuous attainments. Let it be, if you please, the great conceit a man has of his own wisdom & knowledge.

And how can he learn any thing, who conceits he already knows every thing? Who is to teach him who imagines he knows better than any one else? From whom will he deign to take a lesson? Should any one attempt to inform him, vanity & pride immediately take the alarm, & close the heart against instruction. His indignation is roused that any one should presume to rate their knowledge above his, & surlily concludes that knowledge hath fixed her seat with him.

It would not be so bad did this temper confine itself to the things of the world. But it will obtrude itself into religion, & there it has as great influence & worse consequences. For let a man once entertain the opinion that he understands religion perfectly, & is a master of the christian system, & he will soon conceit that he understands all mysteries & all prophecies, & hardens his heart, & blinds his eyes, & closes his ears against instruction forever.

Such a man is generally a great admirer of the bible; but then he must construe it for you, & you must implicitly receive his interpretation, or you are no Christian.

Possibly he may ~~make~~ take it into his head to form a new society of Christian professors; in modern stile a New Church, exactly after his own heart. No matter what its doctrines are provided they will catch the common people; for such is his dexterity & wisdom that he can make the bible comport exactly with his system.

Altering the construction, or the reading, or the connection, or putting new meanings to old words, are but triffles to a man of his sagacity & prudence.

If he be a man of some learning, he may call Latin, & Greek, & Hebrew in to his aid; These will open to him an ample field, & various may be his exercises in it. Or he may arm himself with metaphysical reasonings, & philosophycal distinctions, & discant on the justice & goodneſs of God, till he hath set them so completely at variance, that they cannot be reconciled: One or other must be loſt in the contest.

Now, I beg to know what can be done with such a man? No instruction can be instilled into him; His eyes, his ears, his understanding, his mind, his heart are close shut & barred against it. Say what you will, use the most reasonable arguments, produce the plainest authorities, it matters not; he knows better: You are ignorant, he is infallible.

If you recur to the grace & Spirit of God to reclaim him, small will be the hopes, I fear, even from thence. The man is proud; & God, we are told, resisteth the proud, because the proud resist God. The pride & vanity of his heart have resisted, & grieved, & driven away the Holy Spirit, & will not suffer him to return. But

Let us shift the scene, & suppose this person to be under the influence of ambition & worldly interest instead of pride & vanity.

It is necessary for every ambitious man to support a character among the people with whom he lives; that is, if he lives in an elective government. Among a sober religious people, he must therefore support a religious character. He will of course put on a grave & solemn deportment. He will be constant at some place of public worship. He will be ready to talk on religious subjects. He will pay a decent regard to religious appearances.

pearances. If there be a variety of religious denominations in the country, he will, on particular occasions, attend on them all; to shew that he is no bigot. He will go further, & declare his catholicism by maintaining that one mode of religion is, in reality, just as good as another; that in Gods sight they are all equal, & good men belong to them all: That as every man hath a right to exercise his own judgment in the choice of his religion, he hath chosen that denomination which he thought the best; but he wishes well to all.

But take notice, this is a wise & prudent man, determined to make every thing, even his religion conduce to his aggrandisement & wealth. He hath therefore chosen that religion in which ~~which~~ he thinks he can best thrive; which will leave the road to the highest places of power & profit open to him. Should the popular religion

changes,

change, he also may change his religion: But never till then, though truth, & reason, & conscience should all concur in the propriety of his doing so.

Now only suppose this man to have made a wrong choice, How are you to set him right? Till you can make his duty & his interest comport together it is impossible. His thirst of power, & profit, & honour hath shut his eyes, & closed his ears, & hardened his heart, against all reasons, all arguments, all motives but what coincide with his interested views — every thing else is hid from him. He must first calculate the chances of profit & loss upon all circumstances, what he may gain, what he must lose, & as the ballance may stand at the foot of the account, so will his determination be.

This seems to have been nearly the case of the Scribes & Pharisees, rulers & priests, to whom the text refers, under the character of wise & prudent. Their conceit of their religious knowledge & of their great sanctity; their ambitious views & covetous desires of wealth, all which they hoped to have gratified under such a worldly Meſsiah as they had imagined, closed their ears, & shut their eyes, & hardened their hearts against every thing Jesus could say or do; as perfectly inſenſible to the heavenly wisdom & divine doctrine he taught, as if God had hid them from them.

The end of thes men you know: Growing more & more hardened in their iniquity, they became ripe for Gods justice, & were, they & their nation, swept away by the most dreadful judgments.

It hath been remarked that the same tempers indulged, will forever produce the same effects. The continued indulgence of evil tempers, will debauch the understanding, pervert the will, & harden the heart, till they bring down the vengeance of God — terrible in this world, much more so in the world to come.

With God is no variableness; he is eternal & unchangeable, the same yesterday, to day, & for ever. Human nature too is the same in all ages & countries. The use, therefore, of the subject that has been before us, is of the utmost importance to us; namely,

That we guard our hearts against the baneful tempers of pride & a vain conceit of our own abilities, & knowledge, & prudence, & holiness; against that worldly wisdom & prudence which excite men to convert every thing, even their religion, to their aggrandizement & profit: That we exert our best endeavours, & pray earnestly to God for his Holy Spirit, that they never gain the ascendancy over us: That we be humble & modest, entertain a moderate opinion of our own wisdom & goodness, & give ourselves up to the conduct of that heavenly wisdom which God hath revealed to the world by his Son, which "is pure, peaceable, gentle, easy to "be intreated, full of mercy & good fruits, without "wrangling, & without hypocrisy" (Ja. III. 17) That from the word of God we take the rule of our faith & practice: That we deal fairly & honestly with the bible, & put no forced constructions on it, to accomodate it to our preconceived opinions: That we suffer no attachment to party, or profit, or honour, or pleasure to warp us from our duty, but that we retain our faith & obedience towards God at all risks, & under all disadvantages.

Then shall we be in the very state which the holy Saviour commends under the stile of "little children" or "babes"; ready to learn & receive the truth whenever it is fairly proposed to us; to follow the guidance of that wisdom which is from above; to obey the motions of that grace, the inspirations of his Holy Spirit, which God ever giveth to the humble & meek.

This in truth is what is meant by revealing those things to babes, which are hid from the wise & prudent: to wit, that worldly wisdom, carnal passions, & interested attachments hinder persons under their influence from seeing & receiving the truths of the Gospel, & the motions & inspirations of the Spirit of God: While the humble & disinterested are ever open to the convictions of truth, & to those impressions of goodness, & holiness, & piety which the Spirit of God incessantly powers into all hearts that are not closed against him by pride, or vanity, or passion, or interest [illegible] ~~to every heart that is~~ but are ~~open to~~ open to receive them. And "to him that hath shall be "given & he shall have more abundance" (Matt XIII.12)

Give us all, O gracious God, this humble, meek, & teachable disposition, that, by thy holy inspiration, we may perceive & know what things we ought to do, & may have grace & power faithfully to fulfil the same, through the mediation of Jesus Christ, our Lord & Saviour. Amen.

Sermon the eighth.

Ashwednesday, Repentance.

Joel II. 12.

Turn ye, even to me, saith the Lord, with all your heart, & with fasting, & with weeping, & with mourning. And rent your heart & not your garments, & turn unto the Lord your God; for he is gracious & merciful, slow to anger, & of great kindneſs, & repenteth him of the evil.

We enter this day on the holy season of Lent; a season which the Catholic Church, hath, from the most early period, set apart & observed, as a time of solemn humiliation & abstinence to all her members; calling them to enter seriously into the neceſsary, though poſsibly, the painful duty of self-examination.

The benefits hereby proposed are principally two; that seeing wherein they have offended, they may humble themselves before God, &, with true penitence for their past errors & transgreſsions, & with lively faith in the atonement of the Mediator, apply for that mercy & forgiveneſs which they all so much need. And also, that by retrenching bodily enjoyments, they might moderate the desires & appetites of their animal nature, bring it under the government of reason, & into subjection to the laws of God.

He who never reflects on his past life will never correct what is amiſs in it. None but the thoughtleſs can suppose that he is good enough. None but the inconsiderate can imagine that he hath no errors to reform. None but the stupid can think that he needeth not the forgiveneſs of God.

The delusions of pleasure, the hurry of busineſs

ness, the intrigues of ambition, the lust of covetousness, in a great degree, divide the world among them, & holding men in bondage, allow them no time for reflection. Should the man of pleasure stop to reflect, he may miss an enjoyment, the man of business a good bargain, the ambitious man a post of honour, the miser a sixpence.

Great therefore was the wisdom of the Church of Christ, in appointing an annual season of recollection & discipline for all her children. No other way could she so effectually call the ~~men~~ lovers of pleasure to stop their mad career, & listen to the voice of reason & religion. By their instruction they will learn that immoderate indulgence is the bane of pleasure, & that to enjoy much we must shun excess of every kind; that satiety blunts the senses, & frequent repetition of enjoyment weakens the body; that it is the mark of degenerate minds to be lovers

of pleasure more than lovers of God; that the true
source of pleasure is the favour & loving-kind-
ness of God, & those pleasures only worthy of the
pursuit of an immortal being which flow at his
right hand.

Let also the man who is buried in worldly
business attend to the pious call which the devout
institution of Lent directs to him; "Love not the
"world, neither the things that are in the world.
"If any man love the world, the love of the Father
"is not in him" (1 Jo. II. 15) "Labour not for the
"meat that perisheth, but for that meat which
"endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son
"of man shall give unto you" (Jo. VI. 27) "Seek ye
"first the kingdom of God, & his righteousness, & all
"these things", necessary food & raiment, "shall be
"added unto you" (Matt. VI. 33) "Godliness is
"profitable unto all things, having promise of
"the life that now is, & of that which is to come"+.

+ 1 Tim. IV. 8.

To the ambitious man the Church also addreſseth herself by this holy institution, calling him to the recollection of the instability of all worldly grandeur; to the consideration of all thoſe warnings which God hath given us against affecting a ſuperiority over others; because the indulgen of such a temper will draw the heart from God, & fill it with desires purely worldly. "How can "ye believe", said the holy Jesus — how can ye receive my doctrine — how can ye become my disciples — "who receive honour one of another, "& ſeek not the honour that cometh from God only".

To those who are infatuated with the lust of covetousneſs, the call of the Church, at this ſeaſon, to the duties of reflection & ſelfexamination, is also directed in the most serious manner. The Pſalmist hath told us, that as God resisteth the proud, he hateth the covetous. An apostle hath declared covetousneſs to be idolatry. Against a temper so odious to God & man, many strong testimonies of Jesus the Redeemer are recorded by the Evangelists. Hear one of them. "How hard "is it for them that trust in riches, to enter into the "kingdom of God? It is easier for a camel", or rather cable, "to go through the eye of a needle, than for "a rich man" who trusts in his riches, to enter in"to the kingdom of God" (Mar. X. 24, 25)

Let us then, beloved in Christ, attend to the kind & solemn call of the Church, & employ the holy season on which we have now entered, to those necessary purposes for which it was intended. We all have need of recollection, — to consider our ways, & examine our past lives, that we may see & know the true state of our souls.

When we have done this seriously, in the fear of God, & according to the testimony of our consciences compared with the word of God, the best of us will find abundant reason to humble himself before God, to bewail the weakness

ness of his best purposes, the perverseness of his heart, the wilful transgressions of his life — to exercise the deepest contrition & repentance for them — to beg the merciful forgiveness of his heavenly Father, through the atonement of Christ; & the power of his Holy Spirit, to enable him to amend his life according to his holy word.

That our humiliation & repentance may be effectual to reconcile us to the favour of God, it is necessary that it be sincere.

Sincerity is required in the text by the expressions used in it, "Turn ye even to me, "saith the Lord, with weeping, & fasting, & "mourning. And rent your heart & not "your garments, & turn unto the Lord your "God".

Turning to the Lord with all our heart, denotes that contrition of soul on account of our sins which makes us loath & detest them, joined to that inward

ward change of the desires & affections from sin to holiness, which the scripture calleth a new heart, & a new spirit, & which produce a correspondent change in the outward actions & life.

When we continue in the habit of any sin by committing it whenever temptation assaults us, whatever may be our apparent sorrow, we do but act the part of the hypocrite, & have no claim on the promise of pardon from God. He hath told us, that if we regard iniquity in our hearts, he will not hear us.

The outward expressions of sorrow mentioned in the text, fasting, weeping, & mourning, are acceptable to God only as they are expressive of that inward compunction which is called rending the heart. This compunction God prefers to the rending of the garments, because it is a proof of the reality & sincerity of our repentance.

Rending the garments was an expression of great sorrow & affliction among the eastern nations. This God doth not forbid, but prefers the contrition of the heart before it: For in this sense is the phrase, "Rent your heart, & not your garments," to be understood; not as prohibiting the latter, but prefering the former. After the same manner we understand the expression, "I will have mercy & not sacrifice", not as forbidding sacrifice, but as declarative of Gods prefering the soft emotions of benevolence & mercy; & therefore we ought never to omit works of compassion to our fellow-creatures, under pretence of the worship & service of God.

What hath been said of rending the garments, may with equal propriety be applied to weeping & mourning. They are expressions of sorrow; & when they proceed from a true & penitent sense of our sins, by which we have transgressed the laws of God, & incurred his displeasure, they are acceptable to him, through the intercession of his dear Son.

The same may be said of fasting. It is a token of sharp grief & sorrow. When the heart is afflicted, the mind will brood over its trouble, & knows no consolation but that of indulging its own melancholy reflections. The stomach becomes disordered & loaths its its food.

When fasting is thus the consequence of a broken & contrite heart, a heart broken & rent by a due sense of sin, it is highly pleasing to our heavenly Father, seeing it is the true effect of that "godly sorrow" which "work- "repentance to salvation" (2 Cor. VII, 10)

Fasting is also sometimes the voluntary effect of pious indignation against the lusts & appetites of the body, by which we have been led into sin. They ought, therefore, to undergo some chastisement & mortification for the sin & guilt in which they have involved us. The refusing to gratify the natural cravings of the body, especially in those instances, in which it hath been accustomed to pleasurable indulgencies, appears to be the only method that can answer this purpose. The strength of the desires & appetites of the body depend much on the fulness with which the body is fed. Abstinence, therefore, from food for a time, or retrenching its quantity; or the substituting that which is coarse & less nourishing in the room of that which is delicate & more agreeable to the palate, seems to be the first thing that, on this occasion, would present itself to the mind.

Accordingly we find that, in every religion, true & false, fasting hath been used as an expression of penitence & religious sorrow, which proves it to be agreeable to the sentiments of the human mind. Under the law God commanded it: Our Saviour authorised it by his example, by his command, & by giving directions for the due performance of it. His holy apostles were constant in the use of it. His Church hath appointed stated times & seasons for the exercise of it, that the whole body of Christians through the world, might with one accord unite in humbling themselves before their God, & pour out their contrite confessions & earnest supplications for mercy, befor him who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity.

Another use of fasting is to weaken the desires & appetites of the body which, when unrestrained, hurry us into many offences against God: But when abstinence from food, reflection, & self-examination have been duly exercised, their turbulence will be abated, & the temptations which through them assault us, the more easily repressed.

By fasting St. Paul kept under his body & brought it into ſubjection. By fasting the primitive Christians weaned themselves from the world, & roſe above the influence of its vanities & temptations.

The holy bible hath several instances on record, of the approbation of religious humiliation & fasting, which God ſhewed by remitting or postponing the punishment which he had threatened against haughty offenders. King Ahab, & the people of Nineveh are remarkable examples of this kind. Examples which ought to inspire us with the most exalted notions of the mercy of God, & of the efficacy of true repentance, especially when it is accompanied with humility & with open tokens of compunction & ſorrow of heart.

Let it however ~~be~~ always remembered, ~~that~~ none of these things, neither fasting, nor weeping,

ing, nor mourning, nor any thing we can do, have any virtue of their own to atone for our sins, or to reconcile us to God. It is the blood of Jesus the Redeemer which cleanseth from ſin: And therefore God requireth of us faith in him, to make our sorrow, our fasting, our repentance, our prayers, all the good things we do, acceptable to him. These things are but the means or instruments of holineſs ~~which~~ which God hath appointed to nourish in us the tempers of heaven, & make us partakers of the atonement which Jesus wrought, & which he now rendereth effectual to all true penitents, by his interceſsion in heaven.

It yet remains for me to take notice of the reason aſsigned in the text, why we ſhould "turn unto the Lord our God"; and that is because the Lord is "gracious & merciful, slow to "anger, & of great kindneſs, & repenteth him "of the evil".

Would it not have had more effect on ſinners to have displayed the wrath & vengeance of God against sin? & have called them to repentance by declaring his justice & indignation against impenitent offenders? Upon hardened reprobates it might have more effect. In a congregation made up of hearers who have stiffled conscience till they are almost past feeling, such a ſermon may do good. It ſeems neceſsary to alarm the fears of some people, in order to engage their attention.

What God hath said ought never to depart from our minds. The Pſalmist hath told us, "If a man will not turn, he will whet his "sword; he hath bent his bow & made it ready.

"He hath prepared for him the instruments "of death" (Ps. VII. 13,14) Not less strong are the words of Moses, concerning God, "He repayeth "them that hate him to their face, to destroy "them. He will not be slack to him that hateth "him: He will repay him to his face" (Deut. VII. 10)

But all sinners are not hardened ones. In a Christian congregation, we have a right to suppose there are but few such: I would fain hope, none. Deep contrition, when it beholds nothing but an angry God, armed with vengeance & fury ~~against him~~, is not far from despair: It does not unfrequently end in distraction. Instances may be produced in our own neighbourhood; & distraction surely is no friend to religion. Besides,

Conversions as they are called, upon the principles of fear & fright, never last long. This I affirm on my own obſervation; & for more than forty years I have been an attentive observer of the effects of different preaching; & of the different fits, so called, of religion in this country. In some districts they seem to be periodical, & their period ~~ſeems~~ to be about ſix or ſeven years, & the fit is commonly brought on by one of these vehement preachers of terror. It commonly lasts about a year. By that time these sermons of terror lose their force. People have got used to them, & they paſs for nothing. In another year they become as they were before; & in three or four more have forgot it all. Then should another preacher of terror come among them, there is the same scene to go over again.

In this way some persons have been converted three or four times; for every time they are ſoundly frighted they think themselves converted. And every time they are converted, they are put into a state from which they cannot fall. But as their fear abates, their conversion, & the certainty of their salvation vanish~~es~~ with it.

The subjects of terror seem better adapted to private admonition, & should not be too often brought into the pulpit: For true repentance conversion, is not founded on the justice of God, but on his mercy. It looks to his love; not to his wrath, for pardon. Even the fear of God stands supported by his mercy, & without it would not be fear but despair. "There is mercy with thee, O Lord, "therefore shalt thou be feared" (Ps. cxxx. 4) said holy David.

It appears therefore agreable to the nature of God, that the deluded sinner should be encouraged to embrace that mercy which is offered to the penitent, by considerations drawn rather from the love, than from the wrath of God. The impressions of love are deep & strong & lasting, & naturally produce love again, while the only effect of ~~[illegible]~~ wrath is fear, & that seldom of long continuance.

That God is gracious & merciful, & ready, through the atonement of the Redeemer, to forgive the sins of the penitent, is therefore the only sure encouragement to repentance. Wrath & pardon comport not together; & where pardon is excluded despair will follow, & repentance is shut out forever.

I should here have put an end to this discourse, but as I wish to make it as useful to you as possible, I beg your patience for a few minutes longer. Ask yourselves then, beloved, whether you have need of that repentance to which the Church calls you at this season? If you have, the first step is reflection on your past lives, examination into your past conduct: You will thereby see wherein you have offended, & the weight of your offences.

On such an occasion, you will also consider the infinite majesty & purity of almighty God, the relation you stand in to him, being not only his creatures, but his sinful offending creatures, who not only need his favour, but who must perish without it. For on his favour we depend for all we have or hope for, either in this world or the next. This will dispose you to humility, to sorrow & regret for your offences against him, & to that penitence of heart, & faith in the Redeemer of man, to which remission of sins & eternal life are promised.

When this is the state of the mind, the expressions of repentance described in the text, will naturally follow. The eyes may be dry, but the heart will mourn for those sins against God, of which it is duly sensible. And when we really wish to get the mastery over unruly appetites of the body, which have been used to lead us astray, we shall think it no hardship to discipline the body & bring it into subjection to the will of God by abstinence & fasting.

What hath been said regards us only as individuals. But we ought to consider ourselves also, as being connected with others, & to regard our conduct, not only as we ourselves are personally affected by it, but as it may affect those with whom we are connected.

We stand connected with others in two respects — as we are members of civil society, & as we are members of Christs Church.

As members of civil society we stand connected with all who are members of the same society; & so closely connected, that every member of it may be injured by our evil conduct. If we set an ill example others may be corrupted by it, & we shall, in conjunction with other wicked people, help to bring the judgments of God on it. For God is still the governor of the world, & rules in the kingdoms & states of it.

His chastisements were upon the Israelites in general judgments, when Joel called them to repentance — to rend their heart & turn unto the Lord their God.

He had visited that people with drout, & blasting, & mildew, & devouring insects, & famine. He is the same God now that he was then, has the command of the heavens, & of the earth, & of the seasons still in his hands; & directs them so as to make them fulfil his deſigns in the government of the world. By them he calls his people back to a ſense of their duty, & of their dependence on his providence, when through worldly prosperity, or an over attachment to temporal concerns, they forget their God, & the things that concern their everlasting peace.

As men live in societies, the dispensations of God must be calculated to affect them in that respect; & every one who belongs to the community must expect to feel thoſe chastisements of God which are of a public nature. It becomes, therefore, the duty of every one to live so as not to contribute to general wickedneſs, because that would make it neceſsary for God to visit with general judgments.

He therefore who lives wickedly, & by his example, or influence, or persuasion leads others to do so, is the greatest enemy his country can have. He makes God its enemy, & whets the sword, & bends the bow of the Almighty against it; & who can stand before him when he is angry?

The philosopher, who is vain of his knowledge, is apt to think it an impeachment of his understanding, if he cannot account for every thing that happens in the natural world. He is however apt to stop at the planets, & stars, & comets; & when the seasons are cold, or hot, or wet, or dry so as to injure the fruits of the earth, he will assign conjunctions & oppositions of stars & planets, the influence of eclipses & comets, as the cause of it.

Who then is this mans God? Why the stars, & planets, & comets; for to them he looks for the government of the world.

Vain mortal, look further, even to him who made the planets & stars, for he governs the world. He ordained summer & winter, seedtime &

& harvest, rain & sunshine; & he conducts them so as to instruct, admonish & correct the thoughtleſs inhabitants of the earth when they depart from his ways.

From the dispensations of Gods providence let us learn wisdom; & looking beyond the creature, submit ourselves to the almighty creator of all things, who is now endeavouring, by all possible ways, to lead men to himself, that living in his fear, they may be happy in his favour.

We are also connected with others as we are members of Christs Church. Our duty in this respect obliges us to observe her injunctions, & obey her orders & directions, lest we offend our brethren & destroy her peace.

This would be a good reason, were there not so many strong one, why we should pay attention to the season on which we have now entered. To profeſs to be a member of any society, & not pay a regard to the rules & orders of it, shews inattention to its prosperity & honour.

You see then your duty, both as the creatures & servants of God, the Father & Governor of the universe, & as members of Christs Church. He hath taken you out of the darkness & errors of this world, & hath placed you under the guidance of his Spirit in that society wch he hath established to train men up for the happiness of heaven. It therefore becomes both your duty & interest, to attend to the directions of his Church, & to use devoutly all the means of grace appointed for you in it. Otherwise you lose your advantage, & are in the Church as tho' you were not of it, because you refuse the blessings & advantages there offered to you.

Consider these things; & may the Spirit of God keep you in the unity of his Church, enable you to fulfil your duty in all things, both as citizens & as Christians. Then, when this life is ended shall you be partakers of Gods heavenly kingdom. Amen.

Prevent us, O Lord, in all our doings, with thy most gracious favor, & further us with thy continual help; that in all our works begun, continued, & ended in thee, we may glorify thy holy name; & finally by thy mercy obtain everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Our father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven; Give us this day our daily bread; And forgive us our treſpaſses, as we forgive them that treſpaſs against us; And lead us not into temptation, But deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, & the power, & the glory, For ever & ever. Amen.

Bleſsed Lord, who hast caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning, Grant that we may in ſuch wise hear them, read, mark, learn, & inwardly digest them, that by patience & comfort of thy holy word, we may embrace, & ever hold fast the bleſsed hope of everlasting life, which thou hast given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Twelve Sermons

By

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Bishop of Connecticut & Rhode Island.

Being Vol. 3.

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Sermon, 1.

Joy in heaven for the repenting ſinner

S. Luke, 15. 7.

I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one ſinner that repenteth, more than over ninety & nine juſt perſons, which need no repentance.

That there are difficulties in this text which render it liable to be misunderstood, is evident upon the firſt reading. Being part of a parable, it must, of neceſsity have, in it, some degree of obſcurity: it being the profeſsed deſign of parables, to ~~conceal obvious~~ deliver truths under figures & emblems. Some ~~manifest~~ advantages, however, attend this mode of instruction. The audience is kept in ſuſpence, & their ~~faculties all~~ attention engaged during the narration. Their paſsions, & prejudices remain quiet & undisturbed, & ~~consequently their~~ no reſentment is ~~un~~excited. They are obliged to exercise their reason &

underſtanding to come at the meaning of the parable; wch will, probably, open itself gradually; & when it is unfolded, the mind will receive particular pleasure from the credit it will aſsume of having made the discovery. By ~~all~~ these means, the instruction contained in the parable will be more kindly received, & will make the deeper, & more effectual impreſsion.

Before we proceed to a direct ſolution of the difficulties in the text, it will be best to consider the occasion on which it was spoken, & its connection with the context, by which we shall probably discover its general design: And then by comparing that with the acknowledged principles of our holy religion, the difficulties of the parable will, I trust, ~~will~~ admit of an easy solution, & much useful instruction will ~~will~~ accrue to ~~ourselves~~ us from it.

The beginning of the chapter informs us, that *all the Publicans & ſinners drew near to hear* our Saviours discourses, & that the ſcribes & pharisees found great fault with the familiar intercourse he held with them.

The pharisees were the most numerous & powerful ſect among the Jews. Their name imports *ſeperation*, because they affected to distinguish themselves from other people, by their ſuperior knowledge in divine things, by greater holineſs of life, & a more exact obſervance of the law of Moſes.

The ſcribes were men of education & learning. Their employment was to write out, & correct copies of the jewish scriptures, & of thoſe comments that had been made on them. From hence they took the name of *ſcribes*, or writers. They are also sometimes stiled *lawyers*, becauſe their buſineſs led them into a critical knowledge of the laws & institutions of their religion; & this knowledge set them so high in the estimation of the people, that they were commonly consulted in all intricate cases.

The publicans, were the Roman tax-gatherers, taken from among the Jews, who, by their oppreſsion & injustice, had~~ing~~ rendered themselves infamous, & were despised & abhorred by their country-men.

When the ſcribes & pharisees saw that our redeemer

received publicans, & other notorious offenders, to a free intercourſe with him, they were offended, & cenſured his conduct: And when they perceived their own hypocrisy & evil practices to be detected & expoſed by him in his parables & public discourses, they availed themselves of this circumſtance, to prejudice the people against him, & take off his influence. "Can you suppose this man
"to be a teacher from heaven, or a doer of the will of
"God? He admits vile & profligate men among his
"disciples; nay, takes them for his familiar compa-
"nions, & eateth with them: He must be their friend,
"an abettor of their villanies, & probably practises in se-
"cret thoſe vices which he so openly countenances".

Our bleſsed lord took, at different times, considerable pains to wipe off this aſpersion, & prevent the prejudices that might, on this account, arise against him. He likens himself to the physician, who never attends the healthy & ſound, because they have no need of him, but the sick, that he may relieve, & heal their maladies; so he came not to call the righteous to repentance, because they had no need of it, but sinners of every claſs and degree, & among the rest, the vile & deſpiſed publicans. (see S Luke 5. 31, 32.)

Should it be demanded, who those *righteous* are whom our ſaviour came not to call to repentance, it may be ſufficient, at present to observe — that as the physician has no buſineſs with the healthy, but only with the sick, so only with thoſe sick who are sensible of their malady, desirous of relief, & willing to submit to proper remedies. If we can suppose a sick person to be insensible of his disease, or unwilling to be cured, or obstinate against the use of every remedy; he is no proper subject for the physician to meddle with. This seems to have been the case with the ſcribes & phariſees. They thought themselves righteous & needing no repentance, & therefore they slighted those reproofs & admonitions, in which the publicans & ſinners found themselves deeply interested.

There was another part of our ſaviours conduct which gave offence to the phariſees. He not only ate & drank with publicans & ſinners, but he declared the mercy of God to them upon their repentance & amendment. They, on the contrary, conſidered them as abandoned reprobates, intirely cast off by God, & nowise entitled to his notice or favour. Like the elder ſon in the parable of the prodigal, they expected to engroſs God to themselves, & to exclude all the rest of mankind from even his smalest attention.

To correct this narrow, contracted diſpoſition, by repreſenting the mercy of God, as it is in its own nature, unrestrained by partial conſiderations, & freely extended to the whole human race, & thereby to obviate any prejudices that might ariſe from his converſing with perſons of ſuspected, or bad characters in order to reform them, ſeems to have been the deſign of our lord in all the parables recorded in the chapter from which.

the text is taken. They are three in number — the lost ſheep — the loſt piece of money — & the prodigal ſon: The moral of them all is the same — that however ſelf-love, & pride, & vain conceit, might tempt the ſcribes, & phariſees, & the body of the jewish nation, to consider themſelves as the particular favourites of heaven, & excluſively entitled to the mercy of God, & the bleſsing of ~~the~~ Meſsiah, yet that ~~the~~ Meſsiah was really to bleſs all the nations of the world; & that the merciful forgiveneſs of God, & eternal life after death ſhould be confered on all who ſhould beleive in him, & return to God by repentance & amendment of life: That though the ſcribe & phariſee might by his pride & hypocrisy, & ſelf-confidence, render himself unworthy of the divine favour, & incapable of receiving any benefit from the bleſsings he came to offer to the world, yet that the penitent publican, the contrite ſinner, the returning prodigal, of every country, & of every claſs & denomination of men, were the proper objects of them.

Nay; ſuppoſing the ſcribes & pharisees to be as good & righteous as they thought themselves, they ought not to confine the favour of God to their own persons, or party, for, in truth, all mankind being equally his creatures, and ~~are equal~~ ~~by~~ the objects of his mercy; & there is more joy in heaven over one ſinner that repenteth — how much more, then, at the converſion of the gentile world — than over ninety & nine just persons which need no repentance — a state in which the ſcribes & pharisees ~~falsely~~ suppoſed them selves to be.

Let us now attend to the difficulties that directly ariſe from the words of this text.

1. The first respects thoſe _just_ or righteous _persons who need no repentance._

Has not our ſaviour here put a caſe that never happened? Are not all men ſinners? — all ſubjects to faults & failings? Who then is ſo just or righteous as to need no repentance?

Conſider the nature of repentance, & you will perceive that these questions affect not the matter under consideration: The repentance of a ſinner is the same with his converſion, & means his forſaking one course of life & turning to another. It implies a total change of heart & conduct, from sin to holineſs, from the ſervice of his lusts, to the ſervice of God: And this proceſs every wicked person must go through, whenever he is reclaimed from the error of his ways. But the case of the just, or righteous man is very different. The general tenor of his conduct is obedience to God: And his earnest endeavour is to maintain this obedience entire & perfect, as far as the frailty of his present nature will permit. He is, indeed, ſubject to failings & imperfections, as every deſcendant of fallen Adam must be. He may, therefore, fall into ſin, through infirmity, through ſurprize, through ſudden fear, or violent temptation. ~~But~~ and every fall will demand his ſorrow, & will call it forth: Will humble him before his God, & excite him to cry mightily to him for the grace of his H. S. to

strength

strengthen his efforts, & confirm his reſolutions, & enable him to live more carefully for the time to come. But, yet he needs not repentance in the same ſenſe with the unconverted ſinner; i.e. he needs not to change the general tenor of his life.

There is, therefore, no abſurdity in the ſuppoſition of the text, that there may be many perſons who need no repentance, or conversion; because the general courſe of their lives being obedience to God, there cannot be any neceſsity of altering it.

2. Another difficulty in the text respects that *joy* that is ſaid to be *in heaven over one ſinner that repenteth, more than over ninety & nine just perſons who need no repentance*. God himſelf, in the very construction of the parable, is compared to the ſhepherd ſeeking the loſt ſheep. To keep up the ſimilitude, the joy ariſing from finding the loſt ſheep muſt be aſcribed to him. In another parable in this chapter he is repreſented under the character

of a father rejoicing at the penitent return of a prodigal ſon. But how can God, whoſe bleſsedneſs is infinite, be ſaid to rejoice, when joy ſuppoſes a preſent increaſe of happineſs?

When joy, or grief, or anger, are ascribed to God, we are not to ſuppoſe that he has the paſsions of human nature, any more than that he has the parts of the human body, becauſe hands & eyes are sometimes attributed to him. All ſuch expreſsions are to be underſtood in a qualified ſenſe — in analogy to the nature of man. By the hand of God we underſtand his power, becauſe the hand is the chief instrument of exerting our own power. By the eyes of God is meant his knowledge, becauſe with our eyes we ſee & obſerve things near by & at a distance. When God is ſaid to grieve, or to be angry, we underſtand that something has happened contrary to his will, becauſe ſuch events make us to grieve, & to be angry. We, again, are pleaſed, & rejoice, when our views & wiſhes are accompliſhed; & therefore, is God ſaid to rejoice over a repenting ſinner, because his repentance is agreable to his nature & will, & to that ſcheme of mercy & goodneſs which is intended to promote the happineſs of all his creatures.

3. Another, & indeed the principal, difficulty in the text is, to account for the partiality in the degree of this joy. Is repentance better than inocence? To amend a wicked life better than never to have committed wickedneſs? Why otherwiſe ſhould there be *more joy over one ſinner that repenteth than over ninety & nine juſt perſons who need no repentance?*

I anſwer; This expreſsion alſo is accomodated to the nature of man. The most transporting joy we are capable of is on the first obtaining of something we had long & paſsionately deſired; or on the recovery of what we highly valued & had lost. Conſider what must be the feelings & conduct of a parent upon miſsing one child out of a number all equally beloved.— The rest are immediately disregarded, & left, like the ninety & nine ſheep in the wilderneſs; while the whole care, the whole attention, the whole soul of the parent is after the child that is loſt: And when he is found, there is literally more joy over that child than over all the reſt who were never miſſing. — This is the genuine working of our nature, & by analogy to it, God has thought proper to expreſs his great love & care of the human race which, by sin, has erred & ſtrayed from his ways like loſt ſheep: Endeavouring to make us ſenſible, how very agreable & pleaſing it is to him, that we ſhould forſake our ſins & evil deeds & return to the paths of virtue & holineſs.

Let us not, however, ſuppoſe that God has any fond partiality for the repenting ſinner. All mankind are equally his creatures, & equally dear to him. Whatever diſtinction he ſhall finally make among them, will ariſe entirely from their good or bad qualities: And the difference he makes in this life proceeds altogether

together from his love, & is intended for their benefit; to lead them, by ways & means, best known to himſelf, to that virtue & holineſs which are the neceſsary foundation of their future happineſs.

There is, therefore, nothing unnatural in the ſuppoſition of *Gods rejoicing more over one ſinner that repenteth than over ninety & nine just perſons who need no repentance.* And though a courſe of uniform goodneſs, in itſelf, may be more valuable, & by its ſilent influence, & gentle perſuaſion, tend greatly to keep up a ſenſe of God, & the practice of religion in the world, yet it may admit of a doubt, whether there is not more merit in the converſion of an abandoned ſinner from the error of his ways to the paths of holineſs, than even in a life of ~~even~~ undeviating righteouſneſs. When the paſsions of the mind & appetites of the body are become ſtrong & unruly through long indulgence, hard indeed must be the task to restrain & ſubdue them. The bare attempt deſerves our highest commendation; and when it ſucceeds — and the hardened ſinner ſtops ſhort in the ſteep deſcent to perdition, it exalts his character above all compariſon. Every ſuch reclaimed ſinner is a new conqueſt over the kingdom of satan; a new acceſsion to the kingdom of our Redeemer — an acceſsion which displays the power of Gods grace, & the glory of his mercy. It furniſhes an example of the ſtrongest influence to recall other reprobates from their evil courses, & bring them home to the fold of their ſaviour, & the embraces of their God.

We know that there is a great difference in the tempers, & diſpoſitions & paſsions of men, & that their paſsions are the ſprings of all their actions: The ſtronger, then, their paſsions are, the more violently will they drive on, & the further will they proceed, in any courſe in which they ſhall engage. It is the ſuddenneſs & impetuoſity of their paſsions that generally hurry people, eſpecially young & unexperienced people, into vicious practices. A bad heart is much oftener the conſequence, than the occaſion, of a bad life. Virtue, or holineſs, consists in the due government & direction of our paſsions, not in the extinction of them. The man of the strongest paſsions will, therefore, have the most trouble to regulate & direct them; but he is capable of the highest attainments in holineſs. And though he may, from a careleſs, or bad education, or evil example, or natural depravity, fall into a deſolute, profligate life; yet if, by Gods grace, he becomes duly ſenſible of his errors & vices, of the fatal tendency of unreſtrained appetites & paſsions, & does correct & reform them, he (in other words, — the repenting ſinner) is most likely to rise highest in every christian virtue, & conſequently, to ſtand highest in the favour of God. Right, therefore, & agreable to reaſon, it is, that there ſhould be *more joy in heaven over one ſinner that repenteth, than over ninety & nine just persons who need no repentance.*

1. From what has been said, & particularly from the great love that God has declared to the repenting ſinner, let every one who unhappily is engaged in a life vice & profligacy, be induced to conſider the ſtate he is in. Strong appetites, & violent paſsions may have hurried him into a course of life which habit has rendered familiar,

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& in which, ignorance or careleſsneſs, evil company & bad example may keep him eaſy & quiet; but it is a ſtate which his own reaſon & judgment must condemn. Diſgrace to himſelf, reproach & grief to his friends, must be the conſequence in this world: And if it be perſisted in, the vengeance of that God, will overtake him, at furthereſt, in the world to come; who now continually invites him to repentance & amendment of life; conſtantly striving with him by his H. S. checking him by the admonitions of conſcience, & exciting him to holineſs, by putting good deſires into his heart — who ſeeks him, & wishes for his converſion, as the careful ſhepherd ſeeks, & wiſhes to find, the loſt ſheep that has ſtrayed from his fold: That he has now an opportunity of making ſome amends, by his repentance, for the evil he has done, by his bad example — of giving glory to God by his reformation, instead of continuing to dishonour his holy name and religion by his profligate life: That if he does repent & amend, all his paſt ſins ſhall be pardoned, through the merits of his redeemer, & no more had in remembrance. — Let him alſo remember, — & if he has any ingenuity of temper left, it must have great influence — that his heavenly father deſires his converſion, with ſuch ardor of goodneſs & love, that it will give more joy to him & to the heavenly hoſt than if he had never gone astray from the paths of virtue.

2. From what has been ſaid, let us all learn to repreſs or ſuſpend our raſh uncharitable cenſures against thoſe who appear to be reclaimed from folly & vice. We are apt to ſuſpect all appearances of repentance. If a man has once been bad, we act towards him, as though it was impoſsible he ſhould ever become good. We always recollect what he has been, & are more diſpoſed to remember his former evil deeds, than to conſider his preſent good ones. Every instance of his piety looks to us like hypocriſy; every act of religion like a cover to some baſe deſign. We indeed cannot

not ſee the heart. We know, alſo, that evil purpoſes are too often concealed under the ſhew of religion. There is, therefore ſome excuſe for our ſuſpicions. Charity, however, will diſpoſe us to judge favorably; at least will prevent us from uſurping the prerogative of God, who alone has the right of judging his own ſervants.

3. Lastly; By the repreſentation this parable gives us of the conduct of almighty God towards the returning ſinner, let every one be excited to repentance & amendment of life. We may not have lived in profligacy of manners, or in abandoned vice, or in the gratification of the malevolent paſsions of our nature; but we have all erred & ſtrayed from Gods ways like loſt ſheep: And if he ſhould be extreme to mark what is done amiſs, the very best of us would own that his condemnation was just. Let us then be induced by the tender declarations of Gods love, by the overtures of his mercy, by the compaſsion of our redeemer, by the ſolicitations of the holy Spirit, by the hope of everlasting

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happineſs, by the dread of eternal miſery, to examine our own hearts, & ſee wherein we have offended, & by true repentance & amendment of life, turn to the lord our God, & he will have mercy upon us — he will pardon, & deliver us from, all our offences, confirm & ſtrengthen us in all goodneſs, & bring us to everlaſting life, through Jesus Christ our ſaviour & redeemer. Amen.

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Rom. V. 6.

For when we were yet without ſtrength, in due ſime Christ died for the ungodly. ‖ ~~For ſcarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man ſome would even dare to die.~~

There are two things in theſe words worthy of our ſerious conſideration;

1. The ſtrong argument they containe of the love of Christ to us while we were yet ſinners, exemplified in his laying down his life for us; And,
2. The evident diſtinction they make between the character of the righteous & good man, giving the preferenſe to the latter.

The argument for the love of Christ is in theſe words — when we were yet without ſtrength, Christ died for the ungodly; & its force turns on this point — that Christ died for us while we were yet ſinners, & thereby manifested greater love than if we had been righteous, & innocently fallen into disasterous circumstances. That a man ſhould die for a righteous perſon is, according to S. Paul, a very extraordinary instance of love, & ſcarcely to be expected; howmuch more extraordinary then is it, that a man ſhould die for the guilty, to ſave him from the penalty of his own crimes: And yet this love has Christ ſhewn towards us. Nay more: We were not only guilty ſinners, but enemies to *him*, when *we were reconciled to God* V.10. *by his death*. This is ſuch an inſtance of love as was never before exhibited; as indeed ſurpaſseth all comprehenſion, & had it not been exemplified in Christs dying for us, would have exceeded all belief.

I have conſidered the phraſe, *when we were yet without ſtrength*, as being equivalent to the expreſſion on uſed in the 8th verſe, *whilſt we were yet ſinners*; (becauſe, though the word — ἀσθενῶν — which is tranſlated *without ſtrength*, does primarily mean *bodily weakneſs*, yet it is also uſed to ſignify the diſorders of the mind. (One inſtance will be ſufficient. It is uſed Heb. IV. 15. *For we have not an high prieſt which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities* — where *infirmities* is from the ſame greek word that in the text is tranſlated, *without ſtrength*, & muſt mean depravity of mind, or diſpoſition to ſin, or there would be no force in the apoſtles argument — *but was in all points tempted like as we are*, yet *without ſin*.)

This circumſtance ought to be taken into the account, if we would form a true eſtimate of the love of Christ towards us. He not only died for us when we were ſinners & enemies — the innocent, to save the guilty — the just, to redeem the wicked — the injured party, to reſcue the offending enemy; but he took our nature upon him, & with it, all its weakneſses. He bore the infirmities of our bodies, & the depraved dispoſition of our minds; & in our nature he conquered both; delivering us from the death of the body; ſo that we ſhall not forever be holden by it, but through him be entitled to a glorious reſurrection; & from the depravity of heart wch held us in bondage; for he, remaining *without ſin*, has thereby enabled us, through his holy Spirit, also to conquer ſin, that it may not reign in us to condemnation; but being repented of & forsaken, might, through his merit, obtain ~~[illegible]~~ forgiveneſs, or justification with God, & eternal life.

Thus great & unparalleled, in itself, & in its effects, is the love which Christ hath ſhewn us. And I would to God the ſense of it was so deeply impreſsed on every person, that all might be *constrained* by it, *not to live any longer to themselves*, after the depravity of their own hearts, in ſin, & evil deeds, *but unto him which died for them, & roſe again*, & agreeably to that new creation which they receive from him, which consists in a new life of holy, heavenly 2. Cor. V. 14 &c.

deſires & affections, & every kind of good works.

The uſe which the apostle makes of his diſcourſe on the love of Chriſt is, to excite all chriſtians to a full expectation & confident hope of eternal life in the world to come, through Chriſt who laid down his life for them, that they may under the influence of this hope be induced to deny un-
Tim. 2.12. godlineſs & worldly luſt, & ſeek for glory honor & immortality,
Rom. 2.7. cleanſing themſelves from all filthineſs of fleſh & ſpirit, and
2 Cor. 7.1. perfecting holineſs in the fear of God: Remembring that
Jn. 3. he that hath this hope in him, doth purify himſelf, even as he, that died for him & called him to this hope, is pure.
8, For thus the argument proceeds — God commendeth his love
9, 10. to us, in that whilſt we were yet ſinners Chriſt died for us. much more then being juſtified — pardoned, ~~made righteous~~, & ſo having peace with God — by his blood, we ſhall be ſaved from wrath through him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his ſon, much more being reconciled, we ſhall be ſaved by his life. The apoſtle reaſſumes the ſame argument in chap. 8. v. 10. He that ſpared not his own ſon, but delivered him up

for us all, how ſhall he not also with him, freely give us all things? — all things belonging to that glory & happineſs he hath purchased for us in the world to come, & all the means & helps neceſsary to the attainment of them.

Such being our ſituation, conſider, I pray you, what ſentiments & conduct it requires on your part. And, I perſuade myself, you will readily acknowledge that it requires a return which, I hope, you will not refuse to give —

1. Of Love & gratitude to him who has so exceedingly loved you, & done so much for you:
2. Of firm faith in him, that he will complete that salvation which he has wrought for you, & to the knowledge of which he has called you:
3. Of a ſteady endeavour to obtain, through his merits, that eternal life he has promiſed, by complying fully, through the operation of the Holy Spirit which he has ſhed abroad in your hearts, with all the conditions he requires of you, in his Gospel.

That

1. That we ſhould love him who has so loved us as to die for us, is not only reaſonable in itſelf, & therefore our duty, but so agreable to the diſpoſition of the human heart, that the little appearance of it can only be accounted for, by aſcribing it to that thoughtleſs inattention to their spiritual concerns, which is so obſervable among men. For did they give themſelves time to conſider ſeriously the loſt estate from which they are redeemed, & the compaſsionate regard their ſaviour has ſhewn towards them, when they were dead in treſpaſses and ſins, enemies to God, & conſequently, under the ſentence of his justice, expoſed to eternal death, *without ſtrength*, & therefore unable to help themſelves, they would ſhew their love & gratitude by every expreſsion in their power.

If to this we add, that they are not only delivered, by Christs death, from the punishment of ſin, but that their sin is pardoned & done away, & they restored to peace with God, & with their own consciences, through the satisfaction of Christ, & have the promise of an inheritance in the kingdom of heaven; that God acknowledges them for his children, & gives them a right to apply to him, as to a kind father, for all that they stand in need of, both for this life & the next; particularly for the presence of his holy spirit, to be in them the principle of a new & holy life, that, under his guidance, they may be trained up, & fitted to enjoy their heavenly inheritance; & that at the last day, he will, before men & angels, declare his approbation & acceptance of them in his beloved son, & receive them to the full enjoyment of that kingdom of happiness & glory which he promised to them — and, if there be any ingenuity of temper left, any sense of obligations confered, or kindness received, it must call forth the most grateful praise & ardent love, that the human heart is capable of expressing or feeling.

Let me then call upon you to consider these things; to withdraw your thoughts sometimes from the pursuit of worldly affairs, ~~& suspend your attention to worldly business,~~ & think over what your God & saviour has done for you; & I am persuaded, you will find an hour of such reflections of more advantage, than an hundred spent in any other manner. You will find your spirits composed, your desires moderated, your understandings clear; & you would return to the management of your temporal ~~affairs~~ concerns with minds calm & undisturbed, be able to attend on them without confusion, & disposed to manage every scheme in subordination to Gods providence; to receive every occurrence as coming from him who knows what is profitable for you better than you do yourselves.

And with regard to the interests of eternity they will be highly advanced by such reflections, if not too long intermitted. The troubles of the world would lose their sting, prosperity its poison, & temptations their greatest force. The life of heaven, which is a life of holiness, being

begun

in this world, begun, would daily advance, & increaſe, & gather ſtrength, till the ſoul became daily prepared for the kingdom of God. This conduct would also diſpoſe you to make another return to God for all the love he has ſhewn, viz: the return

2. Of firm faith in him; that he will completely make good that ſalvation which he has wrought for you, & to the knowledge & hope of which he has called you.

For if your ſaviour has been so good as to lay down his life for you when you were ſinners, under the penalty of death, & the full power of the original apostacy of Adam, being enemies to God, & accurſed by him; & God has been so good as to accept this attonement for ſin, & through his unbounded love, to receive you to mercy; giving you the comfortable aſsurance of the pardon of your sins, & acceptance with him, through the blood of your redeemer, can you doubt that he will graciouſly pleaſe to carry on the ſalvation that he has begun? If he loved you & had mercy on you were *yet without ſtrength*, dead in treſpaſses & ſins, will he not continue to love you & take care of you, now you are *quickened together with Christ Jesus*, & your ſins pardoned through him? If he pitied you when you were his enemies, will he not regard you now you are his children? If he saved you from death, will he not give you life? If he pardons your ſins, will he not give you the grace of repentance to qualify you for pardon? If he gave his ſon, will he not give his holy ſpirit? Will he not freely give you all things neceſsary to life & godlineſs in this world, & everlasting life & happineſs in the world to come? — *O put your trust in the lord*, ye children of men; *for the lord is loving unto every man, & his* Ps. 145. 9. *tender mercies* are *over all his works*.

There can be no greater instance of ingratitude than to doubt the lovingkindneſs of God, & distrust his fidelity, after the astonishing things he has done for our ſalvation. Examine, therefore, your heart, & ſee whether there be no bitter root of unbelief lurking there. And be aſsured that God deſires your ſalvation with more earnestneſs than you can do — that he has no wish towards you but to do you good,

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& make you partakers of his mercy — to lead you, by his Spirit through this polluted world to the haven of everlasting reſt. To this end he redeemed you from death, & gave you the promiſe of eternal life; & he will make his promise good, if your own unbelief & obſtinacy do not prevent it.

Theſe conſiderations will, if duly attended to, diſpoſe you to make that other return for the love of Christ wch I mentioned, viz: the return

3. Of a ſteady endeavour to obtain, through his merits, that eternal life he has promiſed, by complying fully, through the operation of the holy Spirit which he has ſhed abroad in your hearts, with all the conditions he requires of you in his Goſpel.

Hard indeed would it be, if the great love Christ has ſhewn, & the wonderous things he has done, should fail of accomplishing their end. And yet, this must be the caſe, at least with regard to you, if you obstinately refuse to comply with the conditions on which ~~[illegible]~~

the forgiveneſs of your ſins & eternal life are promiſed. These conditions are particularly ſpecified in the New-Testament, &, I ought to preſume, are well known to you. The firſt is faith in Christ as the redeemer & ſaviour of the world, implying an undoubting reliance upon him under that character, & confidence in in the efficacy of that attonement he has made, & in the virtue of the blood he ſhed; & an humble truſt that he will make it effectual to your salvation: And also the belief that his attonement is accepted by God, & his blood conſidered as the price of your redemption, & the meritorious cauſe of your juſtification, or the remiſsion of your sins, & of that eternal life that is promiſed through him. This belief will lead you to comply with the next condition required in the gospel, viz:

Repentance *from dead works*, i.e. ſinful works that deſerve death, to serve the living God: Or as it is ſtiled by some, converſion, or the turning of the heart & life from sin to holineſs, from the power of satan unto God. For if Christ died to redeem us *whilſt we were yet ſinners*, he died to redeem us because we were sinners & as such needed his redemption; consequently he died to redeem us from sin; therefore, if we continue to live in sin, we continue to live in that state, from which Christ died to redeem us, & can have no right to expect to receive the benefits of his death.

The ſcriptures are so expreſs in declaring that Christ died to redeem us, not only from the penalty, or punishment of sin, but from sin itself, that it might not reign in us, or have dominion over us, that it seems ſuperfluous to insist on particular paſsages. In Heb. 9. 13, 14. the apostle says, that if the mosaic sacrifices *sanctify to the purifying of the flesh*; *how much more ſhall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without ſpot to God, purge your consciences from dead works to ſerve the living God*. And again Rom. 6. 6.— *our old man is crucified with him, that the body of ſin might be destroyed, that henceforth* *we might not serve ſin.* And S. Peter, (1. 24.) speaking of Christ says, *who his ownself bare our ſins in his own body on the tree, that we being dead to ſin, ſhould live unto righteouſneſs.* The preaching of the holy Matt. 3.2 baptist was, *Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.* And our bleſsed saviour himself began 4.17. his own ministry with the same declaration, *Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.* These are more than intimations; they are strong declarations, that no one was qualified to enter into that kingdom, & to receive the benefits & bleſsings of it, unleſs he repented & forsook his sins. Let no one, therefore, deceive himself with a perſuasion that Christ having died to redeem him from the punishment of sin, he may continue in it, & trust to Christ for pardon & ſalvation. This would be to *continue in ſin that grace may abound,* which S. Paul condemns with abhorrence.

Let us therefore all remember what the holy apostles of our Redeemer have declared, concerning the neceſsity of repentance & amendment of life that lies on all to whom his gospel is preached. From them we shall learn, That though God winked at the times of former ignorance, yet having sent his Son into the world to redeem it, he now commands all men every where to repent, because he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead. (Act. 17.30.) The same apostle S. Pauls accounts for the forbearance & longsuffering of God towards us, ~~[illegible]~~ from this consideration, that his goodness in delaying punishment may lead us to repentance. Rom. 2.4. And S. Peter attests the same thing; God, says he, is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. (2 Pet. 3.9.)

These considerations & authorities will, ~~if attended to~~ I trust, have great weight with you. And I pray God they may effectually excite you seriously to examine your own hearts, & try your lives & conversations by the rule of Gods commandments, & whereinsoever ye shall perceive yourselves

"selves to have offended, either by will, word or deed, there "to bewail your own ſinfulneſs with full purpoſe of a"mendment of life."

There is one other general condition on which eternal life & all other benefits of Christs death are promised, which yet remains to be mentioned, viz: holineſs of life, or unreſerved obedience to all the laws & institutions of the goſpel. For there are the ſame ſtrong reaſons why we ſhould, in obedience to God, live holily, & order our conversation agreably to the laws of the goſpel, as there are why we ſhould repent & forſake ſin. Repentance itſelf is no further valuable than as it is the beginning of a new & holy life. Sin is our ſeperation from God — that which prevents our happineſs with him; & thence ariſes the neceſſity of our renouncing & forſaking it. Holineſs conſiſts in the conformity of our nature to the will of God, whence alone our capacity of happineſs with him ariſes; & therefore it is required of us. Without holineſs no man ſhall ſee the Lord; i.e. be happy with him in heaven, (Heb. 2.14) as his apoſtle teſtifies. And the same apostle earnestly preſses holineſs of life on all Christians because they are the *temple of God*, & have the *Spirit of God dwelling in them* — 1 Cor. 3. 16, 17. — *If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy: for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are*. And in Coloſs. 1. 22, he represents it as the deſign of Christs death, not only to reconcile us to God, but that he might present us *holy, & unblameable*, & *unreproveable in his sight*. And the bleſsed S. Peter exhorting us to the practice of all christian duties in obedience to the commandments of God, has these remarkable words — *as he* — Christ Jesus, our saviour, — *which hath called you*, to be his desciples, *is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation*. (1 Pet. 1. 22) *Because it is written, be ye holy, for I am holy.*

These things, beloved brethren, if ye consider, ye will by Gods grace, frame your lives & conversations according to his commandments: And with devout thanks to him who has redeemed you from sin & misery, repent truly of all the errors & wickedneſs of your lives past, & strive earnestly for the time to come to perfect holineſs in the fear of God; so shall ye be admitted to his kingdom of happineſs & glory: Which God grant. &c: &c! amen.

N. London Sep. 11/85
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Considerations on the history of Balaam.

Sermon VII.

Numb. XXIII. 10.

Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.

These, you will readily recollect, are the words of Balaam respecting the children of Israel. By the spirit of prophecy he beheld their future glory, & all the great things that GOD would do for them, & notwithstanding the importunity of Balak, & probably against his own inclinations, instead of cursing, he pronounced them blessed, & wished that his own felicity in death might be like theirs.

The history of Balaam has given a good deal of exercise to the curiosity of Commentators & Expositors. It has been a matter of learned inquiry to discover whether Balaam was a good man, & a true prophet of the true GOD; or kept up an intercourse with evil

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Spirits: Or whether he was only a pretender to ſupernatural matters. Much pains also have been taken to aſcertain what his crime was in go-in going with the meſsengers of the king of Moab after GOD had given him leave to go.

Theſe points indeed have no connection with the meaning of the text. The piety of the wish therein contained will be the ſame which ever way they are determined. There is however no harm in indulging a curioſity of this kind under proper limitations: And as the consideration of the last mentioned particular, may help to take off the imputation of inconsistency, which infidelity has often objected to Moſeses account of this matter, it may not be amiſs to ſpend a little time upon it; especially as there does not seem to be much difficulty in the way, provided we pay a proper attention to the history of the transaction, & a due regard to our own reaſon & underſtanding.

The

History of (103) Balaam.

The Israelites travelling to the land of Canaan, encamped upon the borders of Moab. Their great number & hostile appearance alarmed the king. Fearing they would over-run & conquer his kingdom, he ſent unto Balaam, requesting he would come & curſe that strange people, becauſe they were too mighty for his armies to encounter— *for*, said he, *I know that he whom thou cursest*[2] *is cursed, & he whom thou bleſsest,*[1] *is bleſsed.*

It is plain, from this paſsage, that Balaam must have been in great estimation. He was considered by Balak as a perſon highly favored of GOD, well acquainted with his will, and, however erroneous the opinion might be, capable of influencing his conduct towards mankind. Such a reputation could only be acquired by a virtuous & conſiſtent conduct, & such probably Balaams had been till this time.

When Balaks Ambaſsadors were come to him, they delivered their masters meſsage, & the presents he had ſent. Balaam desired them to continue with him that night, &

& in the morning he would inform them what GOD ſhould ſay to him. Moſes declares expreſsly that GOD *came unto him*, & forbad him to go — *thou ſhalt not go with them* — *thou ſhalt not curſe the people, for they are bleſsed*. This prohibition he readily obeyed, & refuſing to accompany them, diſmiſsed the princes of Moab.

Every circumſtance in this narrative leads us to conſider Balaam as a true prophet, accuſtomed to have communications from GOD, & to obey his will. He gave no anſwer to the meſsengers till he had conſulted GOD, & he faithfully reported the anſwer that GOD made him. He manifested no ſurpriſe at GOD's coming to him, but took it for granted that he would vouchſafe an anſwer to his inquiry.

Balak ſuſpecting that the embaſsy he had ſent was not honorable enough to gratify the pride of the prophet, or that the presents he had made were not

suffecient to satisfy his avarice, dispatched some of
the first princes of his realm, with orders to offer him
promotion in his court, & to aſsure him he should
n. have the chief direction of his affairs, if he would come
17. to him & curse the Israelites. Balaams integrity
seems not to have been proof against this temptati-
on. He should have remembred & obeyed the posi-
tive prohibition he had received, & not have listened
to further overtures. But the honors & preferments
of Balaks court took hold of his heart, & induced
him, after telling them that if *Balak would give*
8. *him his houseful of ſilver & gold he could not go*
beyond the word of the Lord his GOD to do leſs or
9. *more*, to deſire them to *tarry with him that night,*
that he might know what the Lord would say to him.
But why inquire a second time? his answer had
been given him, & in very precise terms. Poſsibly
he hoped to obtain ſome relaxation of the absolute pro-
hibition

hibition he was under. GOD saw the ſtate of Balaams
mind — ſaw that his heart was tainted, & probably ſaw
that he would go at all events; & in this extremity he
did not forſake him. On condition that the men
came in the morning to call him, he permitted him
him to go, but ſtill under the reſtriction of [illegible] im-
plicitly obeying all the directions that he ſhould give
him. [By complying thus far with his deſires, GOD gave
Balaam an opportunity of recovering himſelf by
reflection; which had he improved he might have
preſerved his integrity, & ſhewn himſelf the faith-
ful ſervant of the Almighty. But unhappily, the
preferment & ſplendor of Balaks court were too pleaſ-
ing to be refuſed. He did not chooſe to run the riſk
of the mens calling in the morning, but, neglecting
the condition of the permiſsion, roſe up, & ſaddled his
aſs, & went with them. Had he waited according to
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the command of GOD, the princes of Moab might have thought themselves affronted by the state he assumed, & might have returned without deigning to attend upon him a second time. But had they called in the morning, ~~he would have had~~ having the permission of God, to go with them, he would have gone in innocence, & under the divine favor & protection. [Though angry at his conduct, GOD in mercy pursued the fugitive, & opening the mouth of the dumb ass rebuked the madness of the deluded prophet. The miracle of the asses speaking seems, for a time, to have restrained the impetuosity of Balaams proceedings. He refused to comply with Balaks request to curse the Israelites; & by his refusal, he lost all prospect of that honor & preferment which had drawn his heart from GOD. But his integrity was infected, his mind was debauched, & we find him afterwards pursuing his ambitious views, by plotting against the Israelites, & drawing them into idolatry, with the premeditated design

sign of making them forfeit the favour & protection of Heaven: And in the end he fell a sacrifice to his own machinations, being slain by the Israelites in the saccage of one of the cities of Midian.

From this error of Balaam, let us learn to regulate our own conduct. We see in his example how dangerous it is to depart the least tittle from the commands or prohibitions of God, or to try to accomodate them to our worldly schemes & views. Probably Balaam had, at first, no idea of renouncing his dependence on God, but only hoped to reconcile his acceptance of Balaks offers with his duty. But when he had once let in the temptation of ambition & honor, its force was too great to be resisted. The prospect of being first minister to a great monarch, who had thrown himself into his arms, & promised to be governed by his councils, & do all that he bid him, hurried him on from one degree of wickedness to another, till he became a bonbandoned in villany, & remaining with the Mideanites, the allies of Moab — most likely by agrement with Balak — endeavoured, by gratifying the appetites of the deſsolute among the Israelites, in which he too well succeeded, to draw them into iniquity & idolatry, & thereby subject them to that curſe which he dared not to pronounce with his mouth. We ſee then the rock on which Balaam perished, & let us carefully avoid it, least like him we make ſhipwreck of faith & a good conſcience.

There is another obſervation neceſsary to be made here. — We are all too apt to think, that they who enjoy a larger share of the good things of this life, riches, honors, & preferments, enjoy also a greater share of happineſs. This is more particularly true of those people who live under the preſsure of poverty, & are obleged to take daily care for their daily bread. And if happineſs consisted in sensuall enjoyments, perhaps they would not think much amiſs. But let not appearances deceive us. Happineſs consists not in the unlimitted gratification of the appetites of the body, but in having them regulated & restrained, so as that they shall not transgreſs the bounds of reason & virtue. It is, therefore, no sure attendant on prosperity, nor is it incompatible with the state of humble poverty: For when the desires are limited, the enjoyment of a little will afford more happineſs, than the poſseſsion of an empire with paſsions that know not control.

Conſidering the goodneſs of God, it is more than probable that every persons situation in this world is so ordered, as to give him the greatest poſsible chance for ſecuring his virtue, on which the only firm foundation of happineſs can be laid, either for this world or the next. If so why should we vex & fret ourselves at the station we are in, or envy those to whom the hand of divine munificence has been more liberal? If they are worthy persons & employ their riches to releive the neceſsitous, & their power to protect the weak & friendleſs, we cannot poſsibly repine at the advantages they enjoy. And if they make a bad use of their wealth & power, it is idle & foolish to wish ourselves in their place. Every station in life has its own troubles & temptations; & our duty requires us to discharge with fidelity & diligence the offices belonging to our own state, that we bear its inconveniences & disadvantages with magnanimity & patience, & resist faithfully all temptations to mend our circumſtances by doing evil. Should the providence of GOD open a door for our relief, we may with innocence, & we ought with gratitude to make use of it. But never let us think of relieving ourselves by dishonest means, or by departing from our duty in the ſmalleſt degree. Riches & honor would but poorly compensate the loſs of innocence, & the pleasures of royalty itself would administer no balm to a wounded conscience. But,

Whatever we may think of Balaam, there is certainly something extremely affecting in the exclamation of the text; & we no sooner hear the words uttered than our hearts become interested in the devout wish they contain. For however our appetites & paſsions may lead us to look for happineſs to the world, to court its pleaſures, & covet its enjoyments — however vice & ſensuality may stiffle reflection, & lull conscience asleep, we no sooner think of the end of our life, & ſee the prospect of eternity opening full upon us, than this sentiment recurs, & becomes the earnest wish of our hearts. *Let me die the death of* &c:

To be convinced that this is the wiſh of nature herſelf, & not the effect of prejudice, or gloom, or superstition, consider the different situations of the righteous & the wicked, at this most interesting period, the hour of death. When we see the righteous struggling with misfortune & adversity, & refusing to relieve himself by the smallest deviation from the paths of virtue — when we behold him striving against those appetites & paſsions which others indulge without cenſure, foregoing advantages, & declining opportunities of releiving his wants, or increasing his wealth, by means not strictly virtuous, which yet paſs tolerably well in the world — when we obſerve him cautious & abſtemious in enjoying even lawful pleaſures & innocent gratifications, that he may avoid temptation, preserve his integrity, & be the better disposed for the exercise of virtue — we may poſsibly be tempted to think that he has made but a mean provision for his own happineſs, & that the enjoyments he gives up are but poorly compensated by thoſe he has left. But suspend your judgment till you have ſeen him die; for then only can a true estimate be made of man.

Let us then follow him to the bed of ſickneſs & death. — Though pain & disease wast his body, yet his mind, being formed into the habit of resignation to the will of GOD, is ſecured against peeviſhneſs & impatience. He has no regret at leaving the world, for in his heart & affections he had left it long before. He looks back on his past life with comfort & pleasure, for he has paſsed it in the paths of virtue — in obedience to the commandments of GOD — in doing those things which his reaſon, his conscience, his religion told him were his duty to do. He looks forward to the opening prospect of eternity without fear, for he is going to the house of his heavenly father — to the bosom of his Redeemer — to the embraces of infinite mercy — to the enjoyment of everlasting love. For such a person death has no sting; the grave no terror. With joy & triumph he resigns his soul into the hand of God; & leaves his body to be committed to the earth in ſure & certain hope of a bleſsed resurrection to eternal life through his Redeemer Jesus Christ. Who could view ſuch a scene as this, & not wish to not wish to die the death of the righteous!

If you heſitate, turn your attention to the death of the wicked. While he is in health & prosperity, you will probably think him a happy man; for you ſee not his heart — you know not the vexations of his mind. But attend him in his last scene; view him on his death bed, & as you like his condition imitate his example. In this hour of distreſs he has, he can have, no support, no hope — pardon the impropriety of the expreſsion — but what is derived from despair. That he shall die wholly, soul & body, is his is his first wish. But if there be an eternity to ſucceed — if the soul should live after the body is dead — his only hope is, that GOD is not a GOD of truth; but that he will be leſs ſevere, or more merciful, than he has declared he will be. If he looks back upon his past life, remorſe & horror attend the reflection. If he considers his preſent state, no anxiety can be equal to his. From the world he had all his happineſs. The enjoyments of senſe were all his delight: And theſe are at an end. The world he must leave. The appetites of the body must fail. If he looks forward to his judge, guilt appals him, & conſcience condemns him; Nor has he any reſource left, but to die like a brute, without any hope of future existence, or to stiffle his reflections, harden his heart, & stubbornly wait the pains of damnation.

Should you think that I have taken an unfair advantage by bringing only the last scenes of the righteous & the wicked into comparison; because the selfdenials & hardships of virtue on the one hand, & the pleasures & enjoyments of vice on the other, are all ended. Consider, I pray you, whether this is not the proper time to make the estimate. It is a time that must inevitably come upon us all. However joyleſs you may suppoſe a life of religion to be, & however imagination or habit may heighten the enjoyments of vice, yet considering the short period of this life, & the endleſs duration of the next, it is folly & madneſs to leave out that endleſs duration in the estimate we make of things as they influence our happineſs. Any one would endure an hours pain that would put him in poſseſsion of an age of perfect happineſs: But no reaſonable man would be willing to enjoy an hour of pleaſure that he knew was to be ſucceeded by an age of misery. Yet an hour, or even minute bears some proportion to an age, but the utmost extent of human life bears no proportion to eternity.

May Almighty GOD dispose your hearts to serious reflection, & give you wisdom to make a true estimate of the poſseſsions & enjoyments of this life, & of the never-ending felicities of his kingdom: That so among the various uncertainties of this mortal state, your hearts may ever there be fixed, where true joys are to be found. So be it blessed GOD, for thy dear Sons sake, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

L. 1 Lent 195.

Sermon IX.

Christian sanctification. — Faith & Hope.

1 Thess. IV. 3.

For this is the will of God, even your sanctification.

In discoursing on the first verse of this chapter, I endeavoured to call your attention to the earnest entreaty of its holy author, to consider the commandments of God delivered to us by his holy apostles, to direct us in our Christian life — how we ought to walk, & to please God.

It was observed, that to recollect our past lives, & compare them with the rule of our duty — the holy commandments of our God, the directions of the apostles & Church of Christ — would be a proper employment for the season of Lent, which was intended for that purpose. By examining our past lives, we shall see, that in many things we have come short of our duty, & have offended God by wilful transgressions. A due sense of our sins will produce that godly sorrow which worketh repentance; it will excite us to use devoutly all those means & helps of holy living which the mercy of God hath provided for us in his Church.

"For this is the will of God, even your sanctification" — that you should repent & forsake your sins, & abstain from every thing that is displeasing to him; that you should avoid the defilements of the flesh, the world & the devil, & live in all holiness & righteousness of life.

With this view I called your attention to the old servants of God, the saints of the Christian Church, who were once in the same state in this world which we now are in — with faith & patience working out their salvation; That seeing the way which they pursued, & in which they acquired that eminency of goodneſs which procured them the acceptance of God, & set them as patterns to Christians in all ages, you might be induced to pursue the same course of discipline with them, that with them you may be made partakers of the good things of the world to come.

The will of God with regard to you now, is just the same it was with regard to them while they lived — your sanctification. And this sanctification must be accomplished in you, in the same way it was in them. It must arise from the same source, it must be conducted in the same progreſsion, & it must be perfected in the same manner.

That the Holy Spirit of God is the author & ſource of all holineſs has been remarked. It has been also remarked that the duties in which the sanctification of a Christian consists, are principally, faith, hope, charity, penitence, prayer, sacraments, fasting, & alms. Attend to your bible, & you will find these good works to be the very things which constitute the Christian life, & make it to be what it ought to be in every one who professeth Christ's religion — a life devoted to God. They make the path in which the old saints walked, & in which you must walk, if you wish to please God, & be accepted of him, as they were.

Of all the duties mentioned in this catalogue, *faith* is the foundation. "He who cometh to God, "must believe that God is, & that he is the re-"warder of those who diligently seek him". Without faith it is impossible to please God, because whatever is done from any other principle, is not done through obedience to him, & therefore has no claim upon his acceptance. When we believe what God hath said, *because* God hath said it, & do what God commands, *because* he hath commanded it, then only is our faith acceptable to God, & entitled to the reward he hath promised.

Of the articles which make the faith of a Christian you cannot be ignorant. They are not only in the bible which is in every hand, & I hope is carefully redde & studied by every one of you, but they are comprised, & briefly expreſsed in the Creeds of the Church, one of which you are called to repeat every time you aſsemble for public worship. Your duty requires, that while the lips pronounce those articles, the heart should feel their truth, & answer to God for the sincerity & soundneſs of its faith. Then will you be disposed to live in the practice of those duties which rise from them; & your faith will become the source of ready & cheerful obedience, highly agreeable to God.

For instance; When you repeat, "And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord." — If your heart really believes Jesus to be the Son of God, ~~it will unavoidably~~ & witnesseth the sincerity of this faith to God, it will unavoidably make you worship & adore him as very & true God, of the same nature & essence with the Almighty Father. You cannot avoid putting your trust & confidence in him, as your God & Saviour. You will readily obey him as your Creator, & Governor, & Judge, & rely upon him for grace & protection here, for immortality & glory hereafter.

Again; When you profess your belief of the communion of saints — If your heart really believes what your tongue declares; if it attests before God in truth & sincerity your faith in this article of the Creed, it will forceably draw you to preserve & practise all that peace, unity, concord & brotherly love in the Church, which its holy fellow-ship requires. Otherwise this communion can not be preserved. And if you do not endeavour to preserve it, by your own quiet, peaceable, & orderly behaviour, how can you be said to believe it?

The belief of this article, therefore, will call forth all that love & good-will towards the members of Christs body which they ought to have for each other; all duteous behaviour to its rulers & governors, all kind & affectionate condescension to the weak & more ignorant, all that charitable relief to the neceſsitous & afflicted, which the precepts & spirit of our religion enjoin.

It will also call forth our prayers for every member of Christ, that they may in their vocation & ministry, truly & piously serve God, & be made partakers of his gracious promises. It will moreover call forth our praise & thanks to God, for all the faithful departed, especially for those who have been eminent for their piety & virtue — the choice veſsels of Gods grace, the lights of the world in their ſeveral generations, the patterns of the Christian life to all ſucceeding ages — beseeching God to give us his grace, that we may follow their good examples, & with them may be made partakers of his heavenly kingdom.

The same observation must be extended

to every article of our common faith. The heart must join the mouth in our profeſsion of them before God & his Church. Those tempers & dispositions, desires & affections, which severally belong to them, must also be brought into action, & made the spring & motives of all our conduct in life; i.e. We must live as persons who firmly believe the principles we profeſs. Then, & then only may we be said, to live by faith, to "walk by faith"; that is to live as Christians.

There is another sense of faith as it is one of the principles of the Christian life; & that is as it imports trust & confidence in God. In this meaning of the word, we live by faith when we live & act under a due sense of Gods being the almighty Ruler & Governor of the world he hath made— the disposer of all things in it, according to the purposes of his own wisdom & goodneſs—

ordering every thing for our benefit, so as best to promote our final & eternal happiness. One consequence of this faith is, that it assures us, God will, in his own good time, fulfill all his promises to us, & to his whole Church.

In this sense indeed, properly speaking, faith is the foundation of our hope, the second duty & virtue of the Christian life, & a main instrument of holiness. "Faith" said St. Paul, "is "the substance" — the full assurance, the substantial expectation "of things hoped for". Again he said, "We are saved by hope". In this world we are only in a state of salvation. We have not yet attained its full completion. But tho' our faith in the promises & veracity of God, "we "are begotten to a lively", to a living, operating, certain "hope, through the resurrection of our

"Lord Jesus Christ, of an inheritance incorruptible, "undefiled, & that fadeth not away, reserved in "the heavens for us" believers (1 Pet. 1.3) For this reason Christians "rejoice in the hope of the glory "of God" — the hope of receiving that glory with which God shall crown all his faithful servants.

In 1 Cor. XIII. 13. St. Paul mentions *hope* as equally neceſsary to the Christian with faith — "Now "abideth faith, hope, charity, these three" great principles & virtues of the Christian life. In 1 Theſs. V. 8. the "hope of salvation" is ſtiled "the helmet" of a Christian; because by his hope he is defended under the aſsaults of his spiritual enemies, as the head of the warriour was defended by his helmet from the ſtrokes of his adversary's sword.

Not to take up the time with particular quotations, it will appear to every careful reader of the bible, that it considers the hope of a bleſsed immortality, as the animating principle of the

Christian; that which gives energy to his devotions, & vigor to his obedience; which inspires him with resolution in his duty, with courage in temptation, with patience in adversities & evil accidents of the present life. Under all circumstances we are directed to recur to this hope, & keep our heavenly inheritance in full view, that we faint not, nor grow weary in well doing, & thereby fail of obtaining that recompence of reward which awaits those faithful servants of God who endure to the end.

In this sense is hope called "the anchor of the "soul, sure & stedfast"; which ~~fixeth~~ the expectation on that place where Jesus our fore-runner, high-priest, & intercessor hath entered for us; which endureth, holds us fast, secures us safely, in all the battering storms of temptation, persecution, & affliction, till they be overpast.

To shew further the excellency & high value of Christian hope, let it be remembred, that one part, & a principal one, of the wretchedneſs of the wicked in this world, is declared to consist in their being "without hope", & consequently, "without God in the world". That is they have no hope of any future heavenly inheritance, no promise of the favor of God, no certainty of his goodneſs, no aſsurance of his mercy — Miserable state of wretched man, without the knowledge of Christs redemption!

And as hope is the animating principle of the Christians life, that which gives energy & vigor to it, keeps it in health & full activity; so is it also a direct principle of holineſs & purity in him.

St. John speaking of the privilege of the sons of God at the resurrection, makes it to consist in being like to Christ when he shall apper — being clothed ed upon with spiritual immortal bodies, fitted for the enjoyment of endleſs felicity with him in heaven. "And every man," saith he, that hath "this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he "is pure" (1 Jn°. III. 2, 3)

In exact agreement with St. John, St Paul hath said, to the Coloſsians, "When Christ our life shall appear, "then shall ye also appear with him in glory. Mor-"tify therefore your members which are on the "earth" — your fleshly appetites & desires — "forni-"cation, uncleanneſs, inordinate affection, evil "concupiscence, & covetousneſs, which is idolatry; "for which things sake, the wrath of God cometh on "the children of disobedience" (Coloſs. III. 4, 5, 6)

It being thus evident that hope is the great invigorating principle of the Christians life, that which quickens in him the spirit of holineſs, & carrieth it to its highest perfection; It will be worth our while to note its foundation, nature, progression, that we may not be in danger of deceiving ourselves about it.

It hath been observed that it hath the same foundation with faith, viz: the promises of God. In other respects also it is nearly allied to faith. As faith is that virtue of the soul by which we believe what God hath said, whether by way of promise or threat; so hope is that virtue of the soul, by which we confidently depend on what God hath promised, & assuredly expect its completion. The nature of hope is, therefore, a sure confidence that God will make good his promises, that he will fulfil his engagements, that he will render completely effectual, every assurance he hath given us.

The progression of hope is from weaker to stronger degrees of assurance, & depends much on our attainments

ments in holiness. It being the nature of Christian hope to purify the soul, by exciting & quickening the Spirit of holiness in it; the greater purity the soul attains, the stronger will its hope be; for by holiness it becomes more & more conformed to the nature of Christ, & consequently more & more entitled to those good things which God hath promised to them that are conformed to the image of his Son.

God grant that his Holy Spirit may in all things rule our hearts, that we obeying his his will, & being conformed, through faith & hope, to the image of his Son, may obtain his heavenly promises, through the same his Son, Jesus Christ, who liveth & reigneth with the Father & Holy Ghost, one God, to whom be glory forever. Amen.

Appendix.

Appendix.

Having mentioned the promises of God as the foundation of the faith & hope of the Christian, & it being often asked Whether wicked persons (the unconverted) have a right to apply to themselves the promises of God, I take this opportunity to deliver my ſentiments on that subject.

Every man hath a right to apply to himself all the promises of God which are made to persons in his state. The wicked have therefore a right to apply to themselves those promises of God which are made to the wicked, but none other.

God hath promised to regard the repentance of a sinner. A wicked person hath a right to apply this promise to himself, & to expect & confidently to hope, that when he does repent, God will regard & accept his repentance. Again;

God hath promised for Christ's ſake, to forgive the sins of those who repent & forsake sin, & turn to him in newneſs of life. Wicked persons have therefore

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a right to depend on the divine forgiveness through Christ; that if they do repent & forsake sin, their past transgressions shall be forgiven them. Once more;

God hath promised to give his Holy Spirit to those who ask of him the heavenly gift. Every person, therefore, who asks the blessing of God's Holy Spirit in that way which God hath appointed — with that penitency, humility & fervent devotion which God requires, hath a right to assure himself that God will hear & regard him, & will give his Holy Spirit in such a measure as he sees best.

But the wicked man, while he continues in his wickedness hath no right to apply these promises to himself, because they are made to him only on condition of his repentance & reformation. Much less can he apply to himself the promise of life & happiness with God when this life is ended; because it is not only not made to him, but in the bible he is expreſsly excluded from it. God hath declared, that "without holineſs no man "shall see the Lord." Now, as a man can not at the same time be both wicked & holy, the wicked man cannot hope to ſee, i.e. be happy with God.

"Bleſsed are the pure in heart", said Christ, "for "they shall ſee God". The promise is made only to the pure in heart. Only the pure in heart, have, therefore, a right to apply this promise to themselves, or hope to be made partakers of it.

Without multiplying quotations to establish a point incontestibly affirmed in the bible, let me observe, that there is a natural incongruity in ſupposing that a wicked person has a right to apply the promise of eternal life to himself, or to hope for it on any ground but of faith & repentance.

The Christians hope of eternal life is, that when Christ shall appear he shall be like him. Thro' this hope he endeavours after purity, & conformity ty to Christ in this world, by obeying the will of God according to his best ability, & by mortifying all his evil & corrupt affections, & passions, & tempers.

Does the wicked man do this? Does he purify himself as Christ is pure? Does he mortify his corrupt affections? Does the adulterer, the worldling, the extortioner, the oppressor, the deceitful, the malicious — do they resemble Christ in purity? How then can they apply to themselves the promise of seeing Christ in glory, & of being happy with him.

When bitter & sweet, good & evil, truth & falsehood, purity & pollution mean the same thing; When light hath communication with darkness, Christ concord with Belial, God fellowship with satan, then the impenitent may see God in glory; till then it is impossible.

N. L. 2. Lent/95.

Sermon X.

Christian sanctification. — Charity.

1 Theſs. IV. 3.

For this is the will of God, even your sanctification.

I observed to you the last Sunday, that the principal duties of Christianity, those namely in which the holineſs of a Christian chiefly consisted, were faith, hope, charity, penitence, prayer, ſacraments, fasting, & alms. The two first of these, faith & hope, were considered, not so much as doctrines, but as intruments of holineſs which our divine religion has appointed.

I am now to discourse to you on Charity, or universal love to man. It is not my design to enter minutely into the diſcuſsion of its nature,

ture, any further than as it is the great duty of the Christians life, & a principal instrument of that holiness, in which God, who willeth his sanctification, requires him to live. For as there is no attaining that holiness without using the means which God hath appointed for us, it becomes our duty to attend carefully to every method which ~~God~~ he hath directed for that purpose.

The holiness of a Christian is his conformity to the nature of Christ; or it is his doing the will of God. In all things Christ conformed himself to the will of God; doing nothing of himself, but only as it was the will of him who sent him. If we wish to conform ourselves to him, & make ourselves like him in the disposition to obey God, his rule of acting must be ours — to do nothing of our own will, but every thing as it is the will of him who made us & sent us into the world.

God hath informed us that he made of one blood all the nations of the earth. This is ſufficient to let us know, that all men are brethren. They ought therefore to live as brethren; not in animosity & discord, nor in envy & malice, nor in wars & fightings, but in unity & concord, in love & friendship, & in the mutual exchange of all the offices of affection.

What appears thus from the nature & state of man in the world, appears also from the book of God, the poſsitive revelation of his will. Therein we are taught that love & affection are due to all men, & must be shewn to all men, if we would act consistently with the common origine & nature of man, or with the will of our Creator.

But, waving, for the present, all other reasons,

sons, we are told that "God is love, & he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, & God in him". In this doctrine lies the whole reason & noblest motive to universal love & affection — It so changes & exalts our nature as to bring it into union with the Being of all perfection, the author of life, the source of happineſs.

Through love God created man, & gave him will, reason, & understanding, which even in their present debased & corrupted state, are the great excellencies & glory of his nature. Through love he interposed for his redemption when he had fallen into ſin & misery, rescued him from the jaws of sin & death eternal, & opened to him the gate of eternal life, through the atonement of Jesus the Son of his love.

Through love to man, the adorable Jesus, Son of God, left the bosom of his Father, the throne of his glory, to endure all the evils of nature, all the malice of wicked men & apostate spirits, that he might redeem, through suffering, the wretched outcasts of heaven, & restore them to the love & complacency of their algracious, loving Creator. Through life & in death he taught the leſson of love, enjoining it by precept, & confirming it by example.

Thus high in eminency is this divine quality. It is indeed the spirit of heaven itself, & unites every thing to heaven that is inspired with it. The highest ~~idea~~ conception we can form of God is that of infinite love & goodneſs, endeavouring by infinite power & wisdom, to promote the common good & happineſs of all his creatures. And the highest notion we can form of man is, to make him as like God in love & goodneſs as poſsible; using all his finite abilities for the common good of his fellow-creatures, according to his best ability.

On the other hand; Would you form the worst poſsible opinion of human nature, look at a man actuated by malice, spite & ill will. He acts in direct opposition to Almighty God, & is as unlike him as poſsible. He does evil to those whom God loves & preserves, that he may bring them to happineſs. Among all the creatures of God, the ill-natured man is most perverse. He acts in direct opposition to that love, by which he himself, & all the variety of beings which enjoy life in the creation, ſubſist.

Remembering therefore that the whole human race is the object of this love, let us consider how it ought to exert itself towards them. Take God for the example, & we shall see that its endeavour will be to do them good according to our best ability.

If they are in neceſsity, we shall endeavour to relieve them; if in affliction, to comfort them; if oppressed, to deliver them; if ignorant, to instruct them; if in error, to inform them better; if in habits of sin; to admonish & reform them, & bring them to repentance & the fear of God.

Our power indeed of discharging all the outward acts of universal love is much limited; & outward means of doing good may, & necessarily must, fail us. But if our hearts be full of love to others, we shall do all the good to others which our ability will enable us to do: And God will graciously attribute to us, all those works & acts of love & charity which we would have performed, had our ability been equal to our wishes.

From hence it appears that this universal love, which purifies the heart & unites it to God, is only the love of benevolence, which ever wishes, desires, promotes the happiness of all men by all means in its power. It appears also that our obligations to this benevolence never cease, because the state of our nature, & our adoption into the Church or family of God obliges us to imitate his goodness, at all times & on all occasions; because also our redemption by Christ calleth perpetually to the exercise of this love. Out of love to a sinful world he redeemed it; & to bind the imitation of his love on us, he said to his disciples, "A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another — "as I have loved you, so ye also should love one another."

This precept is called *new*, not so much on account of the command itself, which was precise under the law of Moses, & was in force & practised before that law was given, as on account of its *degree*. As Christ loved us, we are to love one another. Now Christ loved us even to death — he laid down his life for us. And St. John hath carried the duty of imitating this pattern of the love of Christ so far as to say, "because Christ "laid down his life for us, we ought also to lay down our "lives for the brethren."

This precept of the apostle marks so precisely the extent of the duty of universal love, that it leaves no room for further inquiry about it. For if we are to love others so as to lay down our lives for them, certainly our love ought to be stinted by no worldly consideration.

Christs love to us being made the standard of our love to others, shews at once, that Charity or universal love is a principle of holiness in us. If we love others as Christ hath loved us, then in love we resemble Christ. But to resemble or be like Christ, is the holiness of Christians, & the foundation of their future glory. "We know that "when Christ shall appear, we shall be like him; "for we shall see him as he is. And every man "that hath this hope in him, purifieth him-

"self, even as he is pure". Strong must this principle be which is capable of effecting so mighty a purpose.

Nor is its effect confined to the soul of the Christian — to the transforming that into the image of the Son of God, by renewing it in the spirit of holiness. It will extend also to the body, & at the resurrection, make that like unto the glorious body of the Son of God.

It hath been thought a hard precept of Christianity, that it requires us, not only to forgive, but to love our enemies, & do good to them. But if you attend to it, you will find the love of our enemies to be possibly, the greatest instance in which we can resemble God, who is love, the author of life, the fountain of holiness & happiness to his creatures.

"I say unto you", said the holy Jesus, "Love your "enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them "that hate you, & pray for them which despitefully "use you, & persecute you; that ye may be the children

"dren of your Father which is in heaven"; for he mak-
"eth his sun to rise on the evil & on the good, & sendeth
"rain on the just & on the unjust."

To love our enemies therefore is the greatest assurance of our being the children of God that we can have; & his children, without this love, we cannot be. But if we are the children of God, it is because we resemble him — are like him in those qualities in which holiness consists. In no other sense can we be the children of God. For that external adoption into the Church or family of Christ, whereby we are made the Children of God, & heirs of eternal life, if it be not followed by that internal holiness which God requires, in which our resemblance of him consists, will be forfeited, & serve no other end but to increase our condemnation.

Charity, therefore, or universal love, as it brings us into so near a conformity to the holy nature of God, must be a principle of holiness wherever it subsists. Like a holy fire it will exalt the soul to the highest pitch of virtue; cleansing & purifying it from all evil tempers & passions, & making it a continual & fruitful source of all holy desires, & divine actions.

It becomes, therefore, our duty to cultivate this heavenly quality, & make it the governing principle of our hearts, that it may from thence descend & regulate our lives, that filling us more & more with the spirit of holiness, we may become more & more like our Creator, & be fully prepared for the kingdom of heaven.

There is one particular in the last cited words of our Saviour, which as it seems to me preminent, even in the heavenly temper of universal love, I beg your patience while I pay some attention to it. — "Pray for them that despitefully use you, & persecute you." —

That intercession for others is a great part of Christian devotion; that the apostles & holy men of the first age of the Church, kept up their love & affection for each other, by their mutual prayers for each other, is a point that will need no proof to a careful reader of the New Testament. They did not cement or support their friendships on worldly principles & passions; but in the hope of a happy eternity together in the kingdom of God, they endeavoured to help each other forward in the road that leadeth to it, by their mutual prayers & thanksgivings.

There is indeed no part, even of universal love, which appears to be more calculated to keep up & improve the spirit of heaven in the soul, than that of intercession for others in our prayers to God. For how is it possible we should not wish & strive to do all possible good to those, for whose good we daily pray? how possible we should ever do injury to those for whose prosperity we continually intercede with God? how tempt others to sin, or set an ill example before them, for whom we constantly beg mercy & forgiveneſs from God? And

If we pray for grace for others that they may live mor carefully in Christian duties; if we beg any particular virtues & good tempers for them, in which we see them to be deficient; it cannot be but that it will make us more careful to comply with the grace of God ourselves, & will increaſe & strengthen those virtues in us which we ask for others. So sure a means of increasing & perfecting our own holineſs is intercesſion for others.

If we consider that this intercesſion, as it is a branch of universal love, must be universal for all mankind, we shall see that it must include the good & the bad among men, foes as well as friends; those who despitefully use us & persecute us, as well as those who are kind to us & do us good.

Consider now this interceſsion for our enemies; & leaving out the consideration that our prayers have a tendency to do them good, in proportion to our own goodneſs & dependence on God; there is nothing so likely to produce & perfect holineſs, & the spirit of heaven in us.

Suppose a man to have done evil to you, hath persecuted & despitefully used you, & done every thing to hurt, & vex, & torment you, he could do; Can you poſsibly return evil for evil? can you bear malice & ill-will towards him? can you hesitate to forgive him, when you daily pray for him; that God would forgive him the evil he hath done, & bleſs him? Suppose contention hath risen between you & your neighbour; Can it be difficult to reconcile you to him, for whom you constantly ly pray, & intercede with God? can you refuse to forgive the injuries which have been done to you by your neighbour when you beg God to forgive, & pour his grace, & all bleſsings on him?

Pursue this thought, & you will find nothing so likely to prevent injuries to others, to preserve peace & good will among men, as this great duty of prayer & interceſsion for all men. Pray for what virtue or goodneſs you will to others, & it will transfer that virtue or goodneſs into your own hearts. Pray daily & earnestly for all men, & you cannot avoid doing them every good in your power, & on every occasion.

This is a delightful subject, & appears to have no end to its ſalutary effects. For if this practice of interceſsion for others was the common practice

tice among Christians, it would shortly convert this vain, disordered, contentious, sinful world, into a glorious resemblance of heaven, & eminently prepare them to rejoice with God, in his eternal kingdom of love & glory. But the time obligeth me to conclude.

Remember, therefore, that this branch of charity, interceſsion for others, is a most powerful instrument of holineſs. It heightens the benevolence of our own hearts, extends it wide as ~~our~~ the love of God extends, & aſsimulates our nature, to the nature & temper of heaven. And most admirably calculated to produce, & perfect in us that divine & heavenly instance of universal love, with all its glorious & bleſsed effects — to increase in us the spirit of heaven, & conform us, by holineſs, more & more, to the nature

ture & will of God, is the precept of the holy Jesus — "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do "good to them that hate you, & pray for them which "despitefully use you & persecute you."

Grant to us, O God, that thy holy Spirit may in all things direct & rule our hearts, & enable us ever to obey this command of thy dear Son. To him, with Thee, & the Holy Ghost, be glory & praise forever. Amen.

N-L-200 "99

Sermon IV.

The blessedness of those who sleep in Jesus.

1 Thess. IV. 13.14.

But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died, & rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him.

Full of consolation & encouragement to the dying faithful Christian are these words of the holy apostle. Full of comfort to us in the death of our pious friends. Strongly do the confirm the faith, & enliven the hope of the children of God.

They represent those who die in the favour of God, as retiring to rest, & falling asleep in the arms of Jesus the Redeemer. They aſsure us that God will bring them again with Jesus at his second coming, when in glorious majesty he shall judge the world. They caution us against that sorrow for our deceased friends which afflicts those who have no hope of a future resurrection to eternal life; & they direct & exhort us to support ourselves in the prospect of our own death, & on account of the death of our faithful departed friends, by such considerations as these—

I. They who die in the faith of Christ— in the Unity & Communion of his Church, which was what the primitive Christians meant by dying with the sign of faith — are not in that state of death which is common to others, but they have fallen asleep in the arms of their God & Saviour — in the particular favour & protection of him who is the Lord & giver of life — they sleep in Jesus.

Natural sleep is a state of rest, & quiet, & refreshment. The cares & sorrows of the world cease, for a time, to distress us. Bodily pain is suspended. The body & mind are strengthened & recreated for the labours & duties, as well as for the enjoyments of the following day.

In analogy with natural sleep, the state of the faithful Christian in death is described. The cares, & sorrows, & pains, & infirmities, & sins of this life cease to distress & torment him. His body rests in the earth whence it was taken. His soul, in the paradise of God who breathed into mans nostrils the breath of life, rests in the bosom of Abraham, in the arms of Jesus, in the society of just men & holy angels, hoping for a blessed reunion with its body, when the time appointed by God shall come. With assured faith, & certain hope, it looks forward to that awful hour, when the trump of God, which on mount Sinai made the host of Israel to tremble, shall wake the dead; when God shall send Jesus, who is now preached to you for your salvation — whom the heavens have received untill the time of the restitution of all things — the consummation of the ages — the completion of the temporary dispensations God — the exact accomplishment of every thing which God hath foretold — shall send him to judge the world, & render to every man according to his deeds — the soul of the pious Christian shall not be neglected — It shall realise its faith. It shall enjoy its hope. For,

II. "Them which sleep in Jesus will God bring "with him" — even all who have died in his fear & service, from Adam to the end of the world.

The immortal Spirit of God which in this life dwelleth in them, & is the principle of their holiness, is also the principle of immortality. He shall raise their dead body from the dust, &, restoring to every soul its own body, shall present them before their Saviour & their Judge. Receiving his gracious acquittal, & being clothed upon with their house from heaven, their bodies shall become glorious, immortal, incorruptible, vigorous & active as light; no longer earthy but spiritual, made like the glorious body of the Son of God, & capable of enjoying that immortal bliss & glory which is the free gift of their heavenly Father, & which will be given to them in that day.

Then also will the faithful Christians who shall be alive at this second coming of Christ, be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, & caught up into the air to meet the Lord, & so shall be ever with the Lord. Nor,

III. After this tremendous scene of judgment is ended, they who are owned of Christ to be his children & servants, both those who have been raised to life everlasting, & thoſe who have been changed, shall in the train of their Redeemer enter his kingdom in triumph, & remain with him in glory & bleſsedneſs forever.

These considerations the faithful Christian will apply to comfort himself under the prospect of that death of the body which he knows must come upon him. He knows too that his Redeemer liveth. He knows that he is faithful, & able to perform the word that is gone out of his mouth. He knows that in the hour of death, in the dark paſsage out of this world through the valley of the shadow of death, the rod & staff, the almighty power of God will guard & comfort him. He knows that an habitation is prepared by his Saviour, where in light, & peace & security from all evil, he shall enjoy every happiness his nature is capable of receiving. He knows that the resurrection will come, when he shall recover again his dead body, then made immortal by the power of God; & receive the kingdom prepared for him from the foundation of the world.

Remember, these blessings are not appropriated to any one Christian. They belong to all the faithful servants of God, who look for that blessed hope, the glorious appearing of the great God even our Saviour Jesus Christ.— Wherefore beloved comfort one another with words.

In

who sleep in Jesus.

II In what particulars the blessedness of pious souls, in the intermediate state between death & the resurrection, may consist, we know not precisely. God hath not thought best to reveal them to us. That there is a state of rest, & peace, & refreshment prepared by Christ for the good, no reasonable man can doubt who reads the declaration ~~of Christ~~ he made to his disciples; "I go "to prepare a place for you — that where I am, "there ye may be also". The same conclusion may be drawn from the general tenor of holy scripture relating to this subject, as well as from many particular passages in it.

That the soul shall be admitted to the presence of God; or ~~to~~ full happiness with God, till after judgment be passed on it, does not appear;

pear; Nor does it appear that there shall be any judgment till after the resurrection. Then, & not before retribution is to follow according to the deeds done in the body.

It is hard to conceive how the soul can enjoy that full & perfect happiness which is promised to good men in heaven, while the body which is part of the man, lies in the grave under the sentence of Gods condemnation for sin. The body it is true is the creature of God equally with the soul; & God hath promised to redeem it from death, as well as the soul from the condemnation for sin. This redemption of the body is to be accomplished by its resurrection from the grave; & it is not till then that Christians are to expect their full adoption, or entrance on that heavenly inheritance which the promise of God hath made over to them.

The earnest, or pledge of this promised inheritance is the holy Spirit which God hath given to be in us, under whose guidance & inspiration we are to live & obey him. He is the author & principle of our regeneration, & of all holiness & goodness in us. His first-fruits is the forgiveness of sins. We, saith St. Paul (Rom. VIII. 23) "who have the first-fruits "of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan" & mourn "within ourselves", under the burdens, & labours, & sorrows of life, "waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body".

Till this happy time shall come, "We are saved "by hope"; that is; The goodness of God having placed us in a state of salvation through his Son, & given the promise of eternal life to all those who obey him, our hope of eternal life, founded on our faith in Gods promise, keeps us, by the power of the Holy Ghost, stedfast in this state of salvation, till the time of the accomplishment of the promise shall come — the resurrection of the body from death, through Jesus the Saviour of men.

Then shall faith & hope end in full enjoyment. Then shall be the manifestation of the Sons of God. Then shall death be swallowed up in victory. Then shall we receive our glorified, spiritual bodies, & triumphantly singing, "O dea "where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? enter in the train of the Lamb of God on our promised inheritance, & be forever with the Lord:

To this glorious period all that is said in the bible of redemption & adoption is to be refered, as to their full & complete accomplishment. They are begun in this world by the grace & goodness of God. Under the calamities & infirmities, of life, the good Christian "groaneth & travaileth in pain"; but, supported by the holy Spirit, he preserveth his faith & hope in God (whose promises can not fail) till his body is laid in the grave in full assurance of a blessed resurrection to eternal life, through the Lord Jesus Christ, when all the great & glorious promises which have been made shall be abundantly fulfilled. But,

If the soul be capable of full happiness while it is in the state of seperation from the body, what great benefit will accrue from the resurrection? A mere change of state without an increase of bleſs, could be of no importance. And yet St. Paul considers the resurrection of the body of so much consequence, or rather neceſsity, that he supposeth the whole system of redemption thro' Christ to depend upon it. How is it true that they who are fallen asleep in Christ are perished if the dead rise not? supposing they can be, & are equally happy with God before the resurrection, as after it.

No glory, that I can find, is promised to the righteous before the resurrection. With their glorified bodies, they are to receive a crown of glory incorruptible, & that fadeth not away. Till then, they rest from their labours. The toils, & vanities, & hurries of this world are at an end. The pains & diseases of the body have ceased. The conflicts with sin & temptation are over. The distressing infirmities, corrupt appetites & passions of human nature perplex them no more.— They sleep in Jesus.

The body, to which this form of speech is more especially applied, lies dormant in the grave. The soul rests in the paradise of God— the heavenly habitation prepared for it by Jesus. In company with the souls of Abraham, & Isaac, & Jacob, of the blessed apostles & martyrs, of all the faithful servants of God from the beginning of the world, it shall enjoy the society of holy angels, the assurance of the divine goodness & love, a full sense of the Redeemers merit & ability to save, the certain hope of a joyful ~~hope~~ resurrection & free acquittal in the day of judgment, & of a gracious reception into the everlasting kingdom of the all-glorious Redeemer.

In Paradise the faithful departed will enjoy as much of the presence & communications of their gracious Saviour as their abilities can bear, or their capacities receive. And probably growing more & more ardent in divine love, more & more pure & perfect in holineſs & all heavenly tempers, shall perpetually increase in happineſs till the time of their complete redemption & full glory shall come, at the resurrection of the just.

This, beloved, ought to be the firm belief & sure hope of every Christian. Under the influence of that faith & hope, what hath he to fear? what desponding apprehension can come upon him? Is he subject to the wants, & infirmities, & pains, & diseases, & death of the body? Let him bear them with patience, & comfort himself with the reflection, that God in his own good time will deliver him from them all by the diſsolution of this mortal body; & will restore it to him again, pure, incorruptible, immortal, & full of glory.

Is he perplexed & heavy-laden with the burden of sin, with boisterous paſsions, unruly desires, & ever-craving appetites? Let him still be patient & resigned, do his duty, beg of God his grace & holy Spirit, to enable him to strive against them. Gods grace will be sufficient for him in this world, & in paradise he shall be delivered from them all. There sin, & sorrow, & sighing, & care shall be done away, & light, & peace, & rest, & refreshment from God shall succeed in their place.

Is he afflicted with the loſs of his Christian friends, whom he held dear, from whoſe society he received his great comfort in this world? If they were such as we ought all to be, Why should he indulge immoderate grief? Nature I know will mourn — will shed the tear of affection. But let him sorrow like a Christian, — like those who have hope in a better life — who have immortality in view — who know that their Redeemer liveth — that he will receive their deceased Christian friends into the heavenly habitations their Saviour hath prepared for them — that he will raise them up at the last day — &, if he also be faithful to the end, will crown them & him with immortal bliſs & glory. ||

It ought rather, beloved brethren, to be matter of triumph to us, when our friends at the end of a well-spent, christian life, whether it hath been long or short, die in christian faith & hope. They are taken to the mercy of God, to the arms of the redeemer, from the sorrows of life, from sin & temptation; & the purest bliss awaits them.

Instead of bemoaning their death as a misfortune, let us remember that to them it is a blessing. To us also it will be a blessing if we imitate their good example their faith & patience — learn to live the life, & die the death of a Christian. Then, whenever it shall please God to take us out of this world, we shall sleep in Jesus as they do. And when He shall appear in ~~g~~ power & great glory to judge the quick & the dead, we, with all those who have departed in the true faith of his holy name, shall ~~[illegible]~~ rise to the life immortal, & have our perfect consummation & bliss, both in body & soul, in his eternal & everlasting glory. Amen.

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B. L. 2 Lent/95.

Sermon XI.

Christian sanctification.
Penitence & Prayer.
1 Thess. IV. 3.

For this is the will of God, even your sanctification.

I come now to discourse to you upon the subject of *penitence*, as an instrument, or means of holiness in the Christian life. By penitence, I do not precisely mean that repentance by which a sinner or wicked person first turns from the error of his ways, from the habits of sin & vice, to the fear & service of God; which is sometimes called his conversion; but that sorrow & compunction of heart for his lapses from duty, & transgressions against God, through ignorance, infirmity, or surprise, into which the good Christian daily falls, which he constantly laments & against which he ever strives. — humbling himself before God under a sense of them, begging his forgiveneſs of them, beſeeching him that they be not remembred against him, & intreating him for the presence of his holy Spirit to enable him to get the victory over them — that every desire, purpose, & thought of his heart being brought into subjection to the will of God, he may serve him in holineſs & purity in this world, & become a meet companion of the Saints in glory.

According to the merciful dispensation of the Gospel, offences through weakneſs of nature, ignorance, mistake, sudden surprise when the mind has not time for recollection, do not put us out of the favour of God. For Christs sake they will be paſsed over & forgiven, if the will be not engaged in them.

Provided however that ~~the~~ we retain no affection D.T.W for ~~it in their~~ them in our hearts, are humbled by a sense of them, & earnestly desire & pray God to be delivered from them.

These offences spring ~~to~~ from the corruption of nature which is in every man naturally deſcended from Adam, &, by the articles of our Church, is declared to subsist even in the regenerate, & naturally tendeth to the transgreſsion of the divine law. While, therefore, this nature remaineth, this evil propensity will, in ſome degree, remain in it, & will continual exercise ~~to~~ our patience, & penitence, till the body & soul be perfectly purified at the resurrection of the just.

It becomes, therefore, our duty to strive earnestly & constantly against this remains of sin in us. For if we strive not against ~~it~~ it, its offences will cease to be sins of informity; ~~and~~ & will acquire the heinous malignity of wilful, deliberate transgreſsions, ~~&~~ which will call for deep & bitter repentance, to wash ~~wear~~ out their foul stain.

From hence you may easily learn the benefit of this penitent state of heart, not only as it is the means of holiness, but a state in which the holiness of a Christian principally consists. For holiness is obedience to the will, or conformity to the nature of God.

Now nothing can shew, or strengthen this obedience or conformity so much as the constant endeavors ~~struggle~~ to overcome every appearance & remains of the evil & corrupt propensities of our nature, which excite us to depart from the holy commandments of our God, & live as appetite & passion shall dictate.

Besides; nothing can more contribute to the humility of a Christian, — a temper in which God particularly delights — than the just sense he entertains of his own infirmities, ~~& of his~~ errors & lapses. He who thinks highly of his ~~own~~ spiritual attainments, is apt to think meanly of others. The next step is to set up his own perfections as a standard for others; & to judge them to be good or bad Christians as they resemble or differ from himself.

This temper Christ severely condemned by the parable of the Pharisee & Publican who went into the temple to pray. The penitent Publican, who, with deep contrition, confessed himself a sinner, & begged the mercy of God, returned to his house more acceptable to his Creator, than the proud sanctimonious Pharisee who, insensible of his many transgressions, boasted of his goodness, when he ought to have lamented his guilt.

Another advantage of this penitent state of heart is, that great security against wilful & deliberate sins arises from it, & sure preservation

vation against habitual wickedness. For how can he do great, & open, & deliberate acts of sin, who is afraid of, & watchful against every appearance of evil?

He who feels himself blameable, & is humbled before his God, & penitent for every fretfulness of temper, every sudden attack of anger, can never live in malice & hatred. He who restrains every disposition to covet what is anothers, can never make himself master of his neighbours property, by fraudful, unjust, & oppressive means. He who is so sensible of the evil propensities of his heart, as to be ashamed of them, when no eye but God's can see them, will not suffer them to break out into open acts of sin against him.

Since then this state of penitence is so great an instrument of holiness, makes, in truth, so great a part of it, & is fruitful of so great advantages to the pious Christian, grateful ought we to be to the holy catholic Church of Christ for appointing a particular season for the exercise of it, & calling us to a more exact & devout discharge of it.

That we ought to live in this penitent state every day, through the whole course of our lives, is most certain; but is no objection to the appointment of a particular season for the particular exercise of it. Through the hurry of worldly business, or the bustle of pleasure, we are all too apt to neglect our daily duty to God, & to our own souls. And were not particular seasons appointed for the recollection of particular duties, & the more strict attention to our spiritual concerns, it is more than probable they would, by most of us, be soon forgotten.

Was Sunday banished from among Christians, & every one left to his own discretion how often he would attend on public worship, How long would public worship continue? Our farms, merchandise, busineſs, pleasure, diversion would soon banish it out of the world, & all religion with it.

They therefore who have raised clamours against the appointment of days & seasons for commemorating the great events in our redemption, & for the particular examination of our hearts & lives, on pretence that these duties ought to be practised every day, have shewn no accurate knowledge of human nature, nor paid much attention to the interests of religion, or its influence on the human mind. The objection destroys the great props of religious worship, leſsens the sense of gratitude to God for the wonders of his mercy,

&

& weakens the motives to holineſs & piety.

If then it is our duty to live constantly under an humble penitent sense of the evil propensities of our nature, to confeſs & lament them before God, earnestly to beg his help that we not fall under them into sin against him, Let us comply devoutly with the requisition of the Church, now she calls & commands us to attend more particularly to those duties. Let us examine our lives by the rule of Gods commandments, & see whether we have, through the past year, regarded them as we ought. Let us note our deficiences, & lament them before God; form new resolutions of doing better for the time to come, & beg of ~~God~~ him his grace & holy Spirit to enable us to keep them, & bring them to good effect.

This brings me to consider another thing which I mentioned as a part, & great means of holineſs — that is Prayer.

It is not my design to enter into a formal explanation of this duty; nor does my subject require it. My object is to set before you the reasonableneſs of your complying with the direction of the Church, & be more instant with God in this solemn season, when you are sure of having your own prayers for yourself & for others, seconded, & rendered more prevalent with God, by the prayers of all pious & devout Christians through the world.

Prayer is distinguished into two kinds, *public* in the Church & family, & *private* in the closet. He who believes God to be the creator of the world, will readily see the propriety of paying the homage of public worship to him. For, if he be the Creator, he must be the Governor of the world; & both reason & nature require, that the blessings of creation & providence should be devoutly acknowledged by us, who are so deeply indebted to them.

In God we live, & move, & have our being. Reason requires that we acknowledge our dependence on him. From his bountiful hand we receive all that we enjoy. We ought, therefore, to pray to him for all that we want, & gratefully return the tribute of our praise, for what his goodness bestows upon us. So shall we give that glory & honour to him, which his Majesty requires, & our nature enables us to pay

Besides; When we had fallen from that state of innocence & happiness in which his goodness had created us, through infinite mercy he gave his own beloved Son, to recover us from our fall, & restore us to a capacity of obtaining through his Son, that happiness we had lost.

This is another, & to ingenuous minds, a strong reason for public worship, & a powerful motive to its daily & devout practice where it can be done.— A reason & motive which I hope have their due weight with you all, & will ever make you punctual in your attendance on the assemblies of his Church— to pay the tribute of your adoration & thanks to him who is your all bounteous Creator, & most merciful Redeemer; to pour out the desires of your souls before him, & make your requests known unto him.

The admonition of St. Paul, "not to forsake "the assembling of yourselves together, as the "manner of some is". (Gr. not forsaking, or leaving our assemblies) But to follow the example of the first Christians, & continue stedfastly in the apostles fellowship & doctrine, & in breaking of bread, & in prayer, will, I trust be [illegible] due weight upon you.

The prayers & praises in public worship must be so general, that the whole congregation, supposing them to be Christians, may join in them. That prayer in which all cannot unite would cease to be common or social worship. It will follow that there will be some things so peculiar to particular Christians, that they cannot, without impropriety, be brought into the public prayers of the Church. These make proper subjects for the private devotions of Christians, & shew the absolute necessity of the prayers of the closet; where the pious devout soul may pour out before God the language of its own feelings, make its wants known to God, & beg the blessings & graces of which it stands most in need.

Another reason which shews the necessity of private devotion is, that we have not daily an opportunity of attending public prayers in the Church. The circumstances of most congregations confine their public worship to Sundays, & to some particular occasions. Was it otherwise; were there daily prayers in the Church; & did our situation permit it, it would most certainly be our duty to attend on them. This want of opportunities for public prayers, renders private devotion of the most urgent necessity.

That private devotion mends the heart, renders it more humble & meek, raises it above the world & its vanities, there can be no doubt. Considered as a duty to God, it ought not to be neglected. Its advantages to us, in every view, are manifest. It is therefore, a matter both of sorrow & surprise, that it is not more attended to by Christians.

If they will pay a regard to the authority of Christ, he spake a parable to this very end; to shew, namely, "that men ought always to pray, "& not to faint." The holy apostle St. Paul, among other directions in the Christian life, hath left this emphatical one—"Pray without ceasing"— The meaning of both is the same—to be very careful & exact in the performance of this duty—to let no day pass without due attention to it, and to omit no proper occasion for the discharge of it.

But however great the advantages of constant devotion may be, it has been objected against

gainst it, that it is useless. God, it is said, will not change his purposes for our prayers; but will always do what is right & best for us, whether we pray to him or not.

Should this objection be left in its full strength, nothing will rise from it against the reasonableness & profit of prayer to God, unless it be further said, that prayer can make no alteration in us.

If prayer tends to call forth, & exercise, & strengthen in those tempers & dispositions of mind which are agreable to God; & to guard us against those that are displeasing to him, its usefulness is evident; & it may become right & proper for God to deal with us & do for us in a manner which would have been improper under other circumstances.

God, we are told, will not hear the prayers of the wicked, because they are abomination to him.

Suppose a wicked man, from true compunction of of heart, & with steadfast purpose of amendment, confess his sins to God, & beg his forgiveness in the way he hath appointed; that is, through the mediation of Jesus the Redeemer. — Will not God hear him? Will he not regard the humble penitent? He hath told us, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful & just to forgive us our sins, & to cleanse us from "all unrighteousness."

No alteration is here supposed to be made in God. All the alteration is in the man, who ceasing to be wicked, is differently treated by God from what he would have been had he continued in his wickedness.

Our Saviour hath told us, that God will give his holy Spirit to those who ask him. Suppose he should see that till we do ask, the blessed gift would be neglected by us; & that earnest prayer is a necessary qualification to receive the holy guest, quest with due reverence, & to obey his divine motions & inspirations. Here no change is supposed to have happened in God, but in ourselves. And this is the great benefit of prayer. It mends & purifies the heart, it increases in us the spirit of holineſs, & makes it proper, I had almost said possible for God to give us those graces & spiritual gifts, which otherwise we should be incapable of receiving.

Be persuaded then to follow the directions which the holy apostles have given you & all Christians — how you ought to walk & to please God. "For this is" still "the will of God, even your sanctification"; that living in holineſs in this world, you may receive the reward of your ste~~a~~dfast faith, & patient hope, & perfect

~~London Augt 14th./85.~~ (39) Huntington 1840

— 3 Δ. 1793.

Sermon III.

The just, & the good man.

Rom. V. ~~6~~.7. (~~The ſecond on the 1st at.~~)

~~For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly~~. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man ſome would even dare to die.

Tettenhall 8d – M – 1817

In a former discourse on these words, I obſerved that they presented to us two subjects worthy of our attentive consideration. viz:

1. The great love of Christ towards us while we were yet sinners, examplified in his dying for us.
2. The distinction they make between a righteous & a good man, & the preference they give to the latter.

The first of these subjects has been particularly attended to, & I hope not without advantage to you. — The argument for the love of Christ, I observed, turned on this point—that Christ died for us while we were yet sinners, & thereby manifested greater love than if we had been righteous, & had innocently fallen into disastrous circumstances: And greater still than if we had been good. For, says the apostle, some may be found who would venture to die for a good man; scarcely one who would venture to die for a righteous man: But Christ died for us while we were yet sinners, neither good nor righteous, & therefore manifested the greatest possible ~~possible~~ love to us ~~that could possibly be shown~~. That more fortitude and humanity are displayed in dying to save an offending criminal, than a just & upright person, will probably be readily acknowledged: But that there is more fortitude & humanity in dying to save a righteous man than a good man, may not be so easily admitted. For is not every righteous man a good man? Can we be better than righteous? Is not this setting up for supererogation—for doing something more than God requires? To answer these enquiries, & settle the matter on true principles, we must attend carefully to the other subject which the text presents to us; viz:

2. The evident distinction which ~~it make~~ it makes between a righteous & a good man, & the preference ~~that~~ it gives to the latter.

Let us therefore examine the two characters, & contrast them with each other. By this means their difference will appear, the propriety of the apostles observation be evident, & much useful matter of reflection arise, to regulate our own opinions & practice.

Let it then be observed that the terms _righteous_ and _good_ in the text relate to _men_ & not to God. That is: What the apostle means by a _righteous_ man, is one who is _just_, & honest, & upright, & virtuous, in his whole intercourse wt mankind: And by a _good_ man he means one who is kind, & humane, & benevolent, & liberal, & merciful, to his fellow-creatures. In this sense is the word _good_ used wn applied to the householder who hired labourers to work in his vineyard. When they whom he had hired in the morning, & agreed with for a penny, murmured at his giving as much to thoſe who came in at the eleventh hour as to them, he demanded— is thine eye evil becauſe I am good? (Mat. 20.15) Art thou envious against theſe men, becauſe I have been kind & liberal to them? For this reaſon alſo works of kindneſs, & benevolence, & mercy are in scripture called good works; & God himſelf is ſaid to be good because his tender mercy is over all his works. Now;

A man may be strictly just and support a character of undeviating rectitude in all his dealings, and yet not deſerve the title of a good man. If, in his intercourſe with others, he always governs himſelf by the ſtrict rules of justice, & always exacts strict justice from others, strict justice may sometimes become cruelty. However the character of undeviating justice, untempered by humanity & mercy, may escape cenſure, it will always be an unamiable one. The miser may be just. He may punctually pay every one his due, and exact no more than his own due from any one; But is the miſer a *good* man? No one ever thought him so. And why not? Becauſe all his views centre in himſelf, & never extend in benevolence to others.

But look at the *good* man & you will ſee a far more exalted character. He indeed regards justice as highly as any one, but it is benevolence that regulates his conduct to others. The diſtreſs of the miserable finds an eaſy acceſs to his heart, & excites the tenderest emotions of humanity. His greatest pleaſure is to give pleaſure: His highest happineſs to make others happy.

The ſame difference that there is between justice and mercy, the ſame difference there is between a just or righteous man & a good man. The righteous man defrauds none, abuſes none, injures none. The good man, not only does no injury, but all the good that is in his power.

Though therefore the character of strict, undeviating justice, may deſervedly escape reproach, yet if we judge from christian principles, it is a character of inferior note, & not entitled to any great commendation. Justice may be selfish; it is often cruel; it makes no allowance for human infirmity, or inability, or misfortune; it punishes every transgreſsion; it exacts the utmoſt farthing; & is oftentimes the ſource of ruin & misery to the more unfortunate part of our ſpecies.

Nor do some of the malevolent paſsions seem much to interfere with the practice of exact justice. Violent resentments are not incompatible with the character. And indeed the boundaries of justice & revenge sometimes approach so very near together, that the man who makes justice the only rule of his conduct is not very likely to distinguish between them. Avarice, & pride, & intemperence also, may, one or other of them, bear conſiderable ſway, even where strict justice is obſerved in our dealings with others.

It is a common obſervation that the cold & phlegmatic are ſeldom benevolent. The reason may be that benevolence, in ſome meaſure, arises from the quickest & tenderest feelings of our nature, & that these feelings depend on the quickneſs & ſensibility of our paſsions. Suppoſe a man to have been born with so even a temper, or to have been so happily educated, that his paſsions seldom give him any great trouble to govern them— Suppoſe him free also from the vices of avarice, ambition & ſenſuality, & that he is just & upright in all his dealings with mankind: If he should want benevolence of heart; if he could behold the wants & miseries of the wretched without emotion; if he could see diſtreſs without wishing to relieve it, or, being able to relieve it, could ſatisfy himſelf with bare, ineffectual wishes, he would be far from deſerving the character of a good man. Nor is there any thing unnatural in the ſuppoſition. Such characters have appeared, & an attentive obſerver must have marked them. Have you never known a man who was addicted to no vice; who was upright in all his dealings, paying to the utmost farthing what was due to others, & exacting from others the utmoſt farthing that was due to him; punctual to his word; peaceable in his neighbourhood, & temperate in his life; who yet never ſhewed any benevolence of disposition, nor ever did any act of generoſity? Such a man may be relied on in every caſe, & trusted in every thing, but only feeding the hungry, & clothing the naked, & relieving the various neceſsities of his fellow-creatures. But the want of benevolence mars his whole character; and with whatever propriety he may be called a *righteous* or *just* man, he by no means merits the appellation of a *good* man.

But an instance may poſsibly mark the distinction between the two characters more ſtrongly than any words. In the 18th chapter of S. Matthew, our Saviour relates the parable of the king who, in accounting with his ſervants, found one who owed him a very great sum; & having not ſufficient to pay, the king commanded him, his wife & children, & all that he had, to be sold, that payment might be made: But upon his earnest entreaty for time to discharge the debt, the king humanely consented, & in terms that shewed a diſposition to relinquish the whole demand: Yet this very servant, who had been ſo mercifully dealt with, finding one of his fellows who owed him an hundred pence, demanded instant payment, & when time & patience were humbly requested, he ſeized on his person, & confined him in jail, till he ſhould pay the debt. There seems to have been no deviation from justice in this transaction. The money was due; the debt was acknowledged; the debtor was unable to pay; & the creditor did what creditors do daily, availed himself of the law, & put him in jail. But was this man a good man? The veriest reprobate who, by Gods grace, ſees his errors & corrects them, & becomes of a humane and benevolent diſpoſition, is greatly his ſuperior in goodneſs, & will stand higher in the favour of God.

Let us now ſee whether some useful reflections may not be drawn from what has been said, particularly from the evident diſtinction that there is between a *righteous* or *just*, & a *good* man, to regulate our own opinions & practice. For this ought to be the end aimed at, both in preaching & hearing ſermons — to have the judgment informed — opinions & principles corrected & established by truth — that the affections being raised towards God, in faith, devotion, & obedience; & expanded in kindneſs, benevolence, & love to men, we may live in the true ſpirit of the goſpel; & proceeding from one degree of piety, holineſs, & charity, to another, become at last fit inheritors of the kingdom of heaven.

We are apt to confine our duty within very narrow limits. If we live honestly & uprightly, obſerve the rules of justice in our dealings, & do no injury to our neighbours, we imagine that we have done all that God requires; We esteem ourſelves very good men, & ſuppoſe we have every reaſon to expect we shall be finally accepted & rewarded by him. — I heartily wiſh every perſon did live in so good a state as this. It would fulfil the laws of civil ſociety & make this world a much better place to live in than it is at preſent. As far as it goes it is good; & as far as it is good it is acceptable to God.

Under the influence of this perſuasion, you will ſometimes hear a person aſk, Why ſhould I fear? Of what ſhould I be afraid in the world to come?

I

I never committed murder, nor robbery, nor theft: I defraud nobody: I injure nobody: I mind my own buſineſs, & trouble not other people. Let your heart then be thankful to your gracious God, that he has kept you from, or ſupported you under, thoſe violent temptations that have been too powerful for many others.

[But does not God require ſomething more of you? He has forbidden you to take the life of your fellow-creature; & you do well to pay abſolute obedience to his prohibition. But has he not commanded you to preſerve the life of your fellow-creature, & render it comfortable to him, as far as ability & opportunity shall enable you? He has forbidden you to defraud, and cheat, to rob & ſteal, to oppreſs & injure. And has he not commanded you to releive the diſtreſsed, to protect the injured, to aſsist the helpleſs, to reſcue the oppreſsed, to be liberal to the poor & needy, to be kind & tender-hearted, & loving to all men, miniſtring to their neceſsities, and promoting their welfare by all the means that shall be in your power?

The perſon who is guiltleſs of murder, & ſtealing, & cheating, & oppreſsion, is entitled to no reward. He is indeed ſecure from the puniſhment which awaits those who are guilty of such enormities, but he can claim no recompence merely because he was not very wicked. God has threatned to judge, & he will condemn, the perpetrators of such crimes; but it is to a very different claſs of people, from those who barely refrain from these crimes, that he has promised his powerful protection in this world, & the reward of his heavenly kingdom in the next. *Bleſsed are the poor in spirit* — they who set so light by their worldly wealth, that they are willing to part with it, on all reaſonable occaſions, in relief to the neceſsitous. — *for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*. *Bleſsed are the meek* — they who are slow to anger, patient under affronts & injuries, & free from malice & revenge — *for they shall inherit the earth* — ~~By~~ By conciliating ye good will, & affections of all about them, they will more probably obtain, & more certainly enjoy, with quiet, & ſatisfaction to themselves, a needful portion of the good things of this world, than the paſsionate and revengeful, who commonly have all their enjoyments imbittered with strife, vexation & trouble. *Bleſsed are the merciful* — they who pity others under their miſeries & miſfortunes; who are diſpoſed to bear with their infirmities, to forgive their offences, to relieve their wants, to comfort them in their afflictions, to reclaim them from their errors & vices — *for they ſhall obtain mercy* — mercy from their judge, in the great day of their account. *Bleſsed are the peacemakers* — they who are of a friendly, mild, peacable diſpoſition, & endeavour to compoſe differences, to heal animosities, to promote peace & quiet among all men — *for they shall be called* — they shall be — *the children of God*, & ſhall be acknowledged, & rewarded as ſuch. (Mat. V. —)

You cannot be ignorant that the judgment of the last day will be determined by the works of kindneſs, & mercy that we have done. They who have attended to the neceſsities of the sick, & hungry, & naked, & poor & helpless, from true benevolence of heart, & regard to the will of their heavenly father, shall be received into that blessed kingdom of peace & love prepared for the children of God. They, on the contrary, whose views centered intirely in themselves, & who never thought of the poor, necessitous, helpless, afflicted, diseased partners of this mortal life, shall be sentenced to that everlasting fire which is prepared for the devil & his angels.

How forcible an argument do these considerations furnish, to make us all attentive to ~~[illegible]~~ the mild, benign, & affectionate propensities of our nature. For, blessed be God! there are, notwithstanding the depravity & perversity of the human heart, the influence of selfish considerations, & the strong power of prevailing custom, there are in human nature dispositions to tenderness, mildness, & love: And blessed is he who, yielding to the soft emotions of pity & mercy, obeys the inspiration of the Spirit of God, & strives to be *merciful, even as his father who is in heaven is merciful*. Little does he consult his own happiness even in this world, who disregards the sweet emanations of the spirit of love, & gives himself up to the influence of the turbulent passions, & tempers of his own nature. He bars the door of happiness against himself. She cannot enter his dwelling, but is constrained to leave him to the dominion of that restless, pining, corroding impatience that would arrogate all enjoyment to itself; & therefore can obtain none but such as are mixed with envy, & imbittered with anxiety. And with regard to the next world— but his lot there hath ~~has~~ been already ~~awarded~~ determined. Driven from the presence of God, the society of Angels, & the company of blessed spirits, he shares ~~takes~~ his portion of despair & torment with apostate angels in the kingdom of darkness.

Let us then be prevailed on to cultivate the principles & ſentiments of tenderneſs & love, of kindneſs and benevolence, of charity & mercy; & to live in the constant exercise of thoſe tempers of humanity & affection to others, which the spirit of our holy religion requires: Not contenting ourselves with doing barely what the laws of justice require, but striving earnestly to add to our faith every Xn virtue, & *Goodneſs* to our righteous dealing. So shall we paſs the time of our ſojourning here in peace, & quietneſs, esteemed & beloved by all that know us, & who will be ready on all occaſions to promote our happineſs, to ſacrifice their own interests to our advantage, & risk their lives, should neceſsity require, for our ſafety. And in the awful day of judgment, when every thing will fail us but goodneſs & holineſs, we shall receive the approbation of God, & through the merits of our Redeemer, the kingdom prepared for his beloved children.

fect charity, & fervent prayer, in the heavenly kingdom of your Redeemer.

Grant this, O God, to every one of us for the sake of Jesus Christ, thy Son, the Redeemer of the world. Amen.

N. B. The ſermons on this ſubject are continued in Vol. 6. at the beginning.

Sermons

and

Discourses,

By Bp. Seabury.

Being Vol. 4.

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Pſalm LXXXVII. 2.

The Lord loveth the gates of Sion, more than all the dwellings of Jacob.

By the good providence of almighty God, we have been this day aſsembled to dedicate this house to him, & to consecrate & set it apart for the celebration of his worship. I humbly trust his Spirit hath been with us in our our pious undertaking, that he hath been graciously pleased to hear from his holy heaven the devout supplications of his ſervants, & to accept the bounden duty & service that have this day been offered to him, both in the liberality of the pious founders, & in the ardent prayers of his ministers & people.

Devoutly do I bleſs his holy name, that having, by his Holy Spirit, inspired the members of this congregation to build a house for the celebration of his holy worship, he hath enabled them to complete their pious design, & to finish the building in such neatneſs & elegance, that they who shall here worship God, in the devout use of the Liturgy of our Church, will literally "worship the Lord in the beauty of holineſs". Glory to his infinite goodneſs, that he hath excited them to appropriate the house they have builded to his worship & service; that we have been permitted to meet in it this day, to offer it up to his tremendous majesty, to set it apart from all common & prophane uses, & to consecrate it forever to his worship & glory, to be a monument of his sovereignty and goodneſs, of our submiſsion & gratitude.

That we have been this day engaged in a

most reasonable & pious service, will appear from the general practice of the servants of God, as well before, as under the law & the Gospel, to consecrate places to the worship of the God of heaven.

Altars simply, without a house to enclose & cover them, seem to have been the first efforts of devotion in this way. And these probably, as well as the sacrifices which were offered on them, owed their origine to the command of God.

Cain & Abel offered the first sacrifices of which we have a direct account. They must, of course, have had an altar on which to offer them. Both probably were in consequence of God's command to Adam soon after his fall. For it is hard to conceive that sacrifices of any kind, especially of living creatures, were the dictate of reason or nature. But however the practice began, we are expressly told, that Noah builded an Altar unto the Lord, after the flood, & offered burnt offerings on it; & that

God was pleased to accept his devotion.

In proceſs of time, these altars were enclosed with groves or plantations of trees, to screne the worshippers from storms & the heat of the sun, as well as to add to the ſolemnity of the ſcene, by the awfulneſs of the shade, & the stilneſs of retirement.

The next improvement for the conveniency of the worshippers, ſeems to have been the inclosing of the altar with a wall or close fence of a sufficient height, after the manner of the Jewish proſeuchæ, or places of prayer.

From hence the transition to houses or roofed inclosures was not great. These were better calculated to keep of the heat of the sun, & the violence of the wind, & more effectually ſecured the worshippers from noise & intrusion.

Probably the Tabernacle which Moses made at the command of God, was the first approach to covered encloſures: Tho' this appears to have been only an open court surrounded with curtains; & the Holy of Holies no more than a part of this encloſure covered with a roof of camblet.

The temple built by Solomon, for any thing that appears from history, was the first regular edifice erected for religious worship. This we know was built, if not by the command yet with the declared approbation of God. What before were called temples seem to have been no more than encloſed places appropriated to sacred offices.

(It is not improbable that the temple of Solomon excited the neighbouring nations to erect stately houses for the worship of their fictitious deities. For as without a true religion there could have been no false religion, so the institutions of God in the true religion, & the ceremonies he directed for its celebration, ſeem to have given rise to various imitations of them by those nations who following the dictates of their own reason, & the fancies of their own imaginations in their religious opinions & practice.

The first idolatry ſeems to have been the worship of the planets, called in the scripture the host of heaven, the sun, & moon, & stars, instead of the Creator. To these objects of their worship were afterward added, their dead heroes, men from whom they had received great benefits, while they lived, in civilization, government, agriculture, & defence against their enemies. To them their fond regard continued after their death, esteemed them as their gods & benefactors. Having changed the object of their worship, it is not strange that they corrupted those rites & ceremonies by which the true worshippers adored the God of heaven)

Upon the return of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity, Zerubbabel, with the approbation of God, erected a new temple, on the foundation of the one which the Chaldeans had destroyed. A little before the time of our Saviour Herod rebuilt this temple with such splendor & magnificence, that it is said to have surpassed that which Solomon had erected. This was the temple which the blessed Jesus honoured & adorned with his presence, & which he rescued from prophanation by his authority & zeal for the glory of his Father.

The solemnity with which the temple of Solomon was dedicated hath been redde to you in the first lesson this day. The account of the dedication of the temple built by Zerubbabel, is recorded in the sixth chapter of Ezra. The rededication of this temple by the Maccabees after the prophanation of the Syrians is related in the fourth chapter of the first book of their history.

I have thrown together these hints because they ascertain the approbation & acceptance of almighty God, our heavenly King & Father, of the dedication

cation of places to his worship & service. He did accept the sacrifice of Abel before, & of Noah after the flood; of Abraham, of Isaac, & of Jacob.

One circumstance relating to Jacob deserves particular notice. On his journey to Padan-aram, he lodged in the fields near Luz. Here he was favoured with a vision of angels, & with a promise from God to be with him & support him. In the morning he consecrated the stone to the Lord, which had served him for his pillow, calling it Beth-el, the house of God, & vowed a vow unto God, to be his faithful servant, to worship him alone, & to give the tenth of all he should acquire to the support of his worship.

The consecration of the tabernacle built by Moses is expressly commanded by God (Exod. XL. 9) to be performed by anointing it, & its vessels, & its furniture with the hallowed oil; "& it", said God, "shall be holy".

When Solomons temple was dedicated & appropriated to God, he testified his acceptance of the gift, by the visible glory of the cloud, & by the fire from heaven which consumed the sacrifices.

He declared his acceptance of the dedication of the second temple, by calling it his house, & by reproving the Israelites for their neglect of it. It was this temple which Haggai called the Lords house, which he encouraged the people to build, & of which he said, "The glory of "this latter house shall be greater than of the "former, saith the Lord of hosts" (II. 9)

Of the conduct of the Maccabees in rededicating that temple after its was cleansed from the pollution of the Syrians, & in appointing an annual festival of eight days in commemoration of that event, Jesus our Saviour declared his full approbation by personally attending the anniversary of that feast. By the authority of his example we are taught, that ſestivals of human appointment are not to be depraved & despised when they have the honour & worship of God for their object: But that when they are established by competent authority, we ought devoutly & reverendly to attend to them.

Let us now paſs from the law to the Gospel. I know it is a commonly received opinion that in the infancy of Christianity, there were no places set apart for the religious aſsemblies of Christians, but that they met in any common house as conveniency ſerved. This opinion is certainly contrary to the authority of antiquity, & I apprehend to the intimations of holy scripture. That they had, if not particular houses, yet particular rooms set apart for the celebration of their ſacred offices, appears, I think, from the ſecond chapter of the acts of the apostles.

In that chapter there is this verse, relating to the apostles & their converts, "And they continuing daily with one accord in the temple, & in "breaking bread from house to house, did eat "their meat with gladneſs & singleneſs of heart". *Breaking bread* most probably relates to the holy communion, & the expreſsion ſeems to have been taken from our Saviours *breaking the bread* at the institution. The phrase is undoubtedly so used in the forty ſecond verse of this chapter, "and "they continued stedfastly in the apostles doctrine & fellowship, & in *breaking of bread*, & in "prayer". St. Paul too, speaking expreſsly of the Eucharist, useth the expreſsion, "the bread which "we break" (1 Cor. x. 16)

The Greek phrase, κατ' οἶκον, is translated *from house to house*, but I can find no instance where the preposition κατα signifies *from*, nor does Hedericus rious give it such a meaning. I should rather depend on the authority of the celebrated Mr Joseph Mede+, that κατ' οἶκον hath the same sense with ἐν οἴκο, in the house. In this sense the phrase is several times rendered in the New Testament — in Rom. XVI. 5. 1 Cor. XVI. 19. Colos. IV. 15. Philem. 1, 2. So that I should suppose the meaning of the above cited text to be, that the apostles & first Christians attended daily in the temple at the stated hour of prayer, — nine o'clock in the morning, & then went κατ' οἶκον, into the house to celebrate the holy Eucharist; after which they eat their common meal or dinner together in love & cheerfulness.

The tradition of the Church will justify us in believing this house to which they retired, to

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+ See Medes Treatise of Churches & the worship & the worship of God being Book II of his works.

to celebrate the Communion, to have been the *upper room*, where Christ celebrated his last paſsover, & instituted the bleſsed sacrament of his body & blood — a consecration far ſuperior to that of Solomons temple. There also he is said to have appeared to his disciples on the first day of the week, the very day probably on which he rose from the dead; & again on the next sunday when Thomas was present with them. There too the apostles assembled after our Lords ascension, & chose Mathias into their order. There the Holy Ghost came on them on the day of Pentecost. There the ſeven Deacons were ordained; And there the first Christian Council was held. At this Council the first Bishop of Jerusalem, St James, presided, & gave sentence in the great question about the obligation of the Mosaic rites upon the Gentile converts. By this ſentence their Christian liberty was established, &

they forever set free from the burthen of Judaism.

This room was on mount Sion, & a splended Church was afterward built so as to inclose it, called the Church of the upper room of Sion. To this Church St Jerom applies the text & the verse before it, "Her "foundations are upon the holy hills: The Lord loveth the gates of Sion more than all the dwellings "of Jacob": And says the prophecy of the Psalmist was fulfilled in the building of this Church.

We have another instance, as I suppose, of an appropriated place of worship in the twentieth chapter of the Acts. This was also an upper room, where the Christians of Troas assembled on the first day of the week to break bread; where St. Paul preached to them, where Eutichus, oppressed with sleep, fell from the window, & was taken up for dead.

Another argument for appropriated places es of worship among the first Christians may be drawn from the salutations in many of St. Pauls epistles. Most of those salutations have a note of distinction addressed to one person & the Church at his house. Coloss. IV. 15. "Salute Nymphas & the "Church at his house". Rom. XVI. 3, 5. Greet Pris-"cilla & Aquila — likewise the Church at their house". 1 Cor. XVI. 19. "Aquila & Priscilla salute you — with "the Church at their house". His epistle to Philemon is addressed, "To Philemon our dear brother "& fellow labourer, & to the Church at thy house".

The enquiry is into the meaning of the phrase, the Church at his, or their house. I suppose it relates to a room in the house appropriated, by the benevolence of the owner, or on some compensation, to the public worship of God, & the celebration of the holy mysteries; and that the salutations of St. Paul are addressed to the congregation of Christians that used there to aſsemble.

The supposition that these were only particular Christian families is an improbable one. For in Rom. XVI. where he salutes Priscilla & Aquila, & the Church at their house, he also salutes Aristobulus, & Narciſsus, *with their household*. He salutes Asyncritus, Phlegon &c: & *the brethren which are with them*; Philologus also & Julia &c: & *all the saints which are with them*. And in 2 Tim. IV. he salutes the *household* of Onesiphorus.

Why is there this difference in the stile, but because there is a distinction in the thing intended to be expreſsed? By their *households*, & *the saints with them*, are probably meant *Christian families*; but the Church at his, or their, or thy house, seems to be determinate, & to mean the aſsembly of Christians that were accustomed to meet there. But if they usually & statedly met there, they must have there had a room or apartment to meet in; & that room was properly a Church, or place of religious worship.

I shall bring one instance more to establish this point, taken from the Epistle read to you this day (1 Cor. XI.17—22) St. Paul, reproving the Corinthians for their prophanation of the holy Eucharist, saith, "What, have ye not houses to eat & drink "in? or despise ye the Church of God?" Here *Church* stands in opposition to ordinary *houses*. And the apostle supposeth it might not be improper to do that in an ordinary house, which would be a contempt of the Church of God, was it done in it.

It is true, here is no mention of dedication or consecration. But then take the consequence — That which is not dedicated or appropriated to God, can not be defiled by being put to any common use. These houses or rooms must therefore have been set apart for Gods service, & appropriated to his worship, or there would have been no contempt or defiling of the Church of God, by eating a common meal in them. Now,

This is the meaning of Dedication, in a religious sense — It is the giving any thing up to God & appropriating of it to his use; that is to be employed only in his service. This must be done by the proprietor, because no one can give what does not belong to him. It then becomes Gods property; & the employing of it otherwise than in his service, is invading his right by encroaching upon what belongs to him.

Consecration is the setting apart for Gods service, by prayer & benediction, what hath been first given to him by the owner. It is therefore the office of Gods minister, who receiving the donation in his name, & as his representative, humbly begs his acceptance of it, & by prayer solemnly devotes it to his ſervice.

Hence appears the reason why things devoted & consecrated to God are holy. In the stones or timber of a Church, there is by nature no more holineſs, than in those of a common house. But a Church consecrated to God, is, in a peculiar ſense, his property, because it hath been given to him by the proprietor, & devoted to his worship & ſervice only. Its holineſs, therefore, arises from the relation it bears to him whose holineſs is inherent & infinite.

It is not only by dedication & conſecration that things obtain this relative holineſs; they also do so by Gods reservation. Poſsibly was I to say there was something of this respecting the forbidden tree in paradiſe, I should not speak much amiſs. The other trees of the garden God gave to Adam for food, but "the tree of the knowledge of Good & evil, he gave him not;" Of that tree God said to him, "Thou shalt not eat of it."

By this restriction God reserved it to be a monument of his dominion & ſovereignty, as well as of Adams obedience & ſubmiſsion.

This was certainly the case of the tythes under the law. The tenth of the produce of the country God never gave to the Israelites, but reserved it to himself, as the tribute or rent of their inheritance; & appointed it to be employed in the support of his ministers & service. Therefore are the tythes called holy, because they belonged to God, & were by him applied to holy purposes — the support of religion & divine worship. Therefore too is he who with-held his tythes said to have robbed God, by taking his property from him.

The same observation may be made of the seventh part of our time. Six days in the week are given to man to be employed in the lawful occupations of life. But the other day, the seventh part of our time God hath reserved to himself, & directed it to be employed in his service. Sunday therefore is a holy day — it is the Lords day — Gods day; & he who spends it in secular employments, especially to the neglect of Gods worship, robs God of his day, & takes from his service that time which he hath reserved to himself, & never subjected to mans disposal.

The reason of this relative holiness arises from the nature of God. "That as the divine majesty
'itself is most sacred & incommunicable (the reason
'why the worship & service given unto him
'must be communicated with no other) so is it
'likewise a part of that honour we owe unto
'his most Sacred, Singular, & most incommunicable
'Eminency, that the things wherewith
'he is served, should not be promiscuous & common,
'but appropriate & set apart to that end

&

'I purpose' (Medes works, p. 325. 1. f.) In confirmation of these sentiments the pious Christian will recollect that God hath ever declared himself a jealous God; jealous in this sense, that he will not give his glory to another, nor share his dignity with any competitor (Is. XLII. 8)

And now poſsibly some reason will appear, why God is said to "love the gates of Sion, more "than all the dwellings of Jacob." As Creator, the Universe is his; he is the Sovereign proprietor of all things; & every thing he hath made is, according to its nature, equally beloved by him. As proprietor of the world, he hath given the earth to the children of men to inhabit; & hath required them to acknowledge his ſovereignty by obeying his commands, & yielding him worship & tribute.

One day in ſeven he hath reserved for the open & public service of himself; & the tribute he requires is the neceſsary expense attending his service & ministers. These are still his property, & it is both irreligious & unjust to detain them from him. Now,

Abstracted from that complacency which must be in God when his creatures act agreeably to his will, there will a more particular complacency ariſe from the homage they pay to him as ſovereign of all nature, & the kind patron of the human race.

God therefore prefered the gates of Sion to all the dwellings of Jacob, because Sion was his property. The rest of the country he gave to his people; Sion he reserved to himself. This seems to be, at least, intimated in Pſ. CXXXII.
" The Lord hath chosen Sion to be an habitation
" for himself; he hath longed for her. This shall
" be my rest forever; here will I dwell, for I have
" a

"a delight therein".

Many learned men are of opinion that Sion was the mount Moriah where God ordered Abraham to offer up his son, & that by that solemnity he sanctified it to himself; they also suppose *that* solemnity to have given it the appellation of "the holy hill" (Ps. XCIX. 9) For upon supposition that this Psalm was written by David, that name must have been prior to the building of the temple.

However that be, there is good reason to suppose that Sion, where the temple was afterward built, was the ground which David bought of Araunah the Jebusite, & dedicated to God. Here probably he placed the Ark, in a tent prepared for it, after he had brought it home from the house of Obed-edom.

That David did dedicate that ground

to God, & thereby made it his property, is certain from the circumstance of his rejecting the generous offer of Araunah to give the threshing-floor to David, namely because he would not offer to the Lord that which did cost him nothing. The end of his buying it was that he might give & dedicate it to God.

Should it be thought that this account of Davids purchase, supposing the ground to have been the mount ~~the mount~~ Moriah, does not accord with the former account, that that mount was Gods property by his own reservation of it; Let it be remembred that Araunah was a Jebusite, not an Israelite, & might know nothing of this reservation, or not think himself obleged by it. It is probable he was king of Jebus when David took it. As he was permitted to live among the Israelites, there must have been some circumstances in his favour. The particular regard of David probably contributed to this event; & that same regard may have permitted him to retain his property. In this view Davids purchase will be the redemption of Gods property which had fallen into the hands of a stranger. In either case it answers the purpose for which I have adduced it, namely to shew that the ground where David offered his sacrifice in the time of the plague was Gods property; probably both by original reservation, & by the redemption of Davids purchase from the hand of a stranger.

The other reason why God loved the gates of Sion more than all the dwellings of Jacob, was on account of the adoration that was there paid to him. By this adoration he was recognized as governor of the Universe. Thereby the glory of his majesty was preserved, & due honor paid to his holy name.

From what hath been said a plain reason offers itself, why places dedicated to God are called his houses. This arises not from the single circumstance of Gods being there worshipped, for then every place, where prayer is addressed to him, would, in the same sense, be the house of God. But houses given & dedicated to God by the owners, become thereby his property; are his houses, & must be employed in his worship & service only; because to put them to any other use would be to take his property without his leave.

Hence too appears the propriety of finishing places of worship before they are dedicated to God. For as David would not offer to God at another mans expence; so there is a manifest incongruity in offering to God that which is imperfect & incomplete in its kind. To do so would be tho't an affront to an earthly prince – a man like ourselves. Judge then of the impropriety of making such an offering to the infinite majesty of heaven & earth, whose immensity filleth all things, whose bounty giveth to his creatures all that they injoy, to whom we owe both the ability & the will to build houses for his worship & glory, to whom, when we offer such testimonies of our gratitude & submission, completed in all the elegance & perfection we can give them, we must humbly bow the head & say, "Of "thine own, O Lord, do we give unto thee".

As there is a manifest propriety in finishing a house of worship before we dedicate it to God, there is the same propriety in doing it with all the elegance that we are able. No one would be pleased with a person whom he had highly obliged, if he should offer him, as a testimony of his gratitude, the refuse & the vile, be it what it would; knowing at the same time that he could have done better; but, from the covetousness of his heart, had put him off in that way, merely that he might not say he had done nothing to acknowledge his obligation. Judge for yourselves in this case; but before you determine, look up to God, to him in whom ye live & move & have your being — to whom you are indebted for the air that you breathe, for the bread that you eat, for the earth on which you live, for your creation when you had no being, for your redemption from sin & death — & then say what returns of gratitude you ought to make for all his inestimable benefits.

Should this consideration be extended a little further, I see no evil consequence that could flow from it. If there be no impropriety in finishing a Church with neatness & elegance according to the ability of the founders, before it be dedicated to God, there can be no impropriety in ornamenting it agreeably to the spirit of our religion, & expressively of its holy doctrines & mysteries.

It is true, nothing we can do, & nothing we can give, can be adequate to the holy majesty of God. "The earth is his, & all that is in it. The "compass of the world, & they that dwell therein". "Heaven is his throne, & earth his footstool." "He "dwelleth not in temples made with hands, neither is worshipped with mens hands, as though "he needed any thing. Nor is he like to gold, & "silver, & stone graven by art & mans device"; yet he hath been pleased to direct that places should be appropriated, & houses erected for his worſhip. He condeſcended to fix the size, & proportions, & to direct the ornaments with which the Tabernacle & its veſsels were finished, in such a way, as to make them emblems & representations of the bleſsings & mysteries of his holy religion.

To the analogy of these directions he hath left us. And, while we confine ourselves to it, there is no danger that our devotion & piety will degenerate either into idolatry or ſuperſtition.

Seeing then that places of worship dedicated to God become thereby his property, & are holy from the relation they bear to him who is holy in the most transcendant manner, With what reverence & humility ought we to enter into them? The common custom of the world is to treat the court of a prince with respect, because of the respect due to him who inhabits it. The Church is the house of God, the court of the most high. There he hath promised to be present with us, & bleſs us; & there the retinue of holy angels attend his divine presence — Therefore he hath commanded us to "reverence his sanctuary" (Levit. XIX. 30) Therefore said he to Moses & to Joshua, "Put off thy ſhoes from off thy feet, for the place "whereon thou standest is holy ground". Therefore also ſaid Solomon, "Keep thy foot", look to thy feet "when thou goest into the house of God". Which expreſsion, interpreted according to the jewish custom, hath the same meaning with "put off thy shoes" — ſee that thy feet be uncovered, out of reverence to the holy place which thou enterest, & to him who dwelleth there. Expreſsed according to our own customs, it will be, Shew some outward reverence when you enter the Church, in token of your inward temper of devotion

tion & obedience to almighty God, whose house the Church is.

On this ground I can see no reason to condemn the practice of most pious people in christian countries, of uncovering the head & bowing the body when they enter a Church, in token of reverence to him whose house it is. Let me recommend this practice to you. It will keep up a devout & reverent sense of God in your minds & dispose you to his fear & service; & it will teach this reverence to others, & impress this fear on them.

It is I know the common practice for people to uncover the head on entering the Church, while the congregation is assembling for divine service. But if it be not done at other times, this reverence will appear to be done rather to the congregation than to God. When ever therefore we enter the Church, on any occasion, the reverence of uncovering the head ought to be paid to the tremendous majesty of our almighty creator.

Another reason why reverence is due to the Church is, because it is the house of prayer & supplication to God, & of the open adoration of his trascendant being & excellency.

We have different houses, & different appartments for different purposes. No man would like to have his bed-chamber or parlour used for a common kitchen. The one is intended for his repose, the other for the accomodation of his family & friends. In like manner should the house of God be appropriated to his worship, to the hearing of ~~hear~~ his holy word, to the celebration of the offices of our holy religion, & not be degraded & profaned by the transaction of common, or tumultuous business.

The Church then being the house of prayer & religious worship, it becomes our duty to frequent its ſervice, that we may, with one mind & one voice, glorify the God of our salvation, partake in the prayers offered to him, receive the instruction of his holy word there redde & preached, & devoutly ~~partake in~~ the holy ſacraments which he hath ordained for our groth in grace, & to communicate to us all the bleſsings of redeeming love. And remember, "God loveth the "gates of Sion, more than all the dwellings of "Jacob"— there he is present, there he will regard your prayers, accept your oblations, & give you his bleſsing.

I trust the particular members of this congregation will duly consider their obligations in this respect, & be ever ready devoutly to discharge their duty to God & to themselves, & to their brethren.

It pleased God to permit their former Church to be burned in the conflagration of the town.

Of his goodneſs he hath inspired the hearts of his people with such piety & liberality, that they have erected this house in which we are now aſsembled, to the glory of his name; & hath prospered their zealous endeavours to that degree, that in two summers it is elegantly finished, & hath, by his mercy, been this day dedicated by the builders, & consecrated by his minister to his especial worship & service.

This day ought therefore to be to them, a day of holy joy, & of devout gratitude to almighty God, who hath done so great things for them.

The best way of shewing their gratitude is to make a right use of this house, so that the glory of God may be manifested by it; always to be ready when the seasons of his worship return, "to come before "his presence with thanksgiving, & to shew themselves "glad in him with psalms"; to rejoice in every opportunity when they can join their brethren, & go "into the house of the Lord", & "worship, & fall down, "& kneel before the Lord their maker."

This will also be the most proper expression of our gratitude to our brethren who have so generously provided this house for us in our necessity. They have spared neither pains nor cost, to accomodate the worshippers of their God & Saviour. We must not therefore turn our backs upon their benevolence, & disregard the liberality they have shewn for the house of our God, & the offices of our holy religion, by carelessly neglecting to attend upon them.

Every other expression of regard ought also to be shewn to them by all who enjoy the benefit of this their good work. We ought to love them for their liberality, to esteem them highly for their christian piety, to pray for their prosperity, & to promote their welfare.

And now the God of peace be with you, grant
you

you to be likeminded in all love & kindly affection one towards another, to abound in christian knowledge & practice, that you may live as becometh saints; keep you in the unity of his Church, & in the faith & fear of his holy name; conduct you through this life to those mansions where they who sleep in Jesus enjoy perpetual rest & peace; & at the resurrection at the last day, receive you to eternal glory & felicity.—

To the holy, triune God, Father, Son, & Holy Ghost, who is able to do abundantly for us, even more than we can ask or think, be adoration & praise, glory & honour, now & forever. Amen.

A discourse on Confirmation.

By Bishop Rattray.

The design of the holy Ordinance of Confirmation is to confer the Holy Ghost on those who have been baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus, that is, made his disciples by christian baptism. This plainly appears from those places in the New Testament where Confirmation is particularly mentioned.

In the eighth chapter of the acts, when St. Philip the Deacon & Evangelist had converted & baptized the Samaritans, the apostles, upon hearing of it, sent two of their own number thither from Jerusalem, namely, Peter & John, who when they were come down, prayed over them, & laid their hands upon them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost, for as yet he was fallen on none of them, only they were baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus. And in the twentieth chapter of the same book — After the disciples at Ephesus (who had formerly received St. Johns baptism) had ~~[illegible]~~ been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, St. Paul laid his hands on them, & thereupon the Holy Ghost came on them. Hence this laying on of hands is joined with baptism in Heb. VI. as one of the first principles of our holy religion.

In the water of baptism, we are washed from the stain & pollution of our first birth, & from all actual sins which ~~any have~~ have been committed; & being thus purified & sanctified, or dedicated to be the temple of God, the Spirit of God in confirmation enters into & takes possession of this his temple, to inhabit, or dwell, & abide therein forever.

In baptism we are made the members of Christ, even of his mystical body the Church; & in Confirmation the Holy Ghost, as the principle of spiritual life to this body (answering to the animal life in the natural body) descends from Him the head to quicken & enliven these his members.

In baptism we die to the former life of the Old man, & being buried with Christ, are raised again out of the baptismal water to a New life, being regenerated, &, as it were, created again in Christ Jesus: And as in our first creation, God first made ~~& formed~~ us as his own workmanship, & then breathed into us the breath of life; So in our regeneration, ~~after we are made new creatures~~ by baptism, the Holy Ghost, as the principle of this new & spiritual life, is infused into us from above in Confirmation. And this Spirit being the seed of the Father, we are thereby made the Sons of God; even by this Spirit of adoption

doption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father; And as sons, heirs of God, & joint-heirs with Christ of the heavenly inheritance. For,

This Spirit, which dwelt in Jesus, & raised him from the dead, dwelling in our mortal bodies, shall quicken them also, & raising them again, shall cloath them with that spiritual body which is our house from heaven, that they may be fashioned like unto the glorious body of Christ: And being likewise the wing of the soul, shall exalt & carry up both soul & body to the kingdom of heaven.

Only let us take care, that we grieve not this Holy Spirit, whereby we are sealed unto the day of redemption; but shunning all the pollutions of this world, be holy in all manner of conversation, as he who hath called & sanctifies us to be his children, is holy;

bringing forth the fruits of the Spirit in all godliness, & righteousness, & truth; & growing up from one degree of grace to another, till we come to the measure of full age in Christ Jesus, & be fitted for the inheritance of the sons of God in the kingdom of our heavenly Father.

A discourse after Confirmation

You have now ratified your baptismal vow, & taken on you the obligations you entered into at your baptism, or which your sureties entered into for you. You have also received the holy rite of Confirmation by the laying on of the hand of the minister of God, & are thereby advanced to the rank of adult Christians in his Church. You must therefore take great care that you bring no scandal on your holy religion by your evil conversation, nor forfeit your title to the kingdom of heaven by apostacy from the faith, by breaking the unity of the Church, or by your vicious lives.

The means which God hath appointed for your groth in grace, & to keep you in the road to his heavenly kingdom are principally two, Prayer, & the holy Eucharist or Communion.

By prayer the gifts & graces of the Holy Ghost are preserved, continued, & increased in us, & the tempers of heaven are matured & brought to perfection.

By the holy Eucharist the spiritual life begun at our regeneration in baptism, is nourished, ſupported, & advanced in strength. It is the food of God to the devout soul, even as bread is the food of our animal life. It is the memorial of the ſacrifice of Jesus the Redeemer for the ſin of the world; wherein the emblems of his most bleſsed body & blood are broken & poured out before the almighty Father, in token of our faith in his atonement, & to plead his merit & death before God, for the remiſsion of our sins, for the comfort of his Spirit, for a happy death, for a glorious resurrection, & for eternal life in heaven.

Let me, therefore, exhort, & entreat, & require you in the name of the Lord Jesus, that you would not neglect these inestimable means of salvation. They are both of them appointed by God for your good; & his poſitive command is on you to be faithful in the use of them.

Let

Therefore let no day begin or end, but in prayer to God — recommend yourselves to his protection, beg of him the pardon of your sins, the comfort of his grace & holy Spirit, & all the divine tempers & virtues which his Gospel requires.

Let no opportunity escape you of approaching his Altar, & joining with your minister & brethren, in the commemorative sacrifice of his Church — the eucharistic offering of the body & blood of Jesus; that your sins may be forgiven through the merit of his death, the Holy Ghost the comforter obtained, the principle of reviviscency imparted to your mortal bodies; that in hour of death, & in the day of judgment, Jesus may be your deliverer & Saviour. Amen.

At confering Deacons Orders on Mr. Wm Green at New London, St. Lukes day, 1793.

A Sermon on
the Office of Deacons.

1 Tim. III. 8, 9, 10.

Likewise must the Deacons be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre, holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. And let these also be first proved; then let them use the office of a Deacon, being found blameless.

Your attention hath been this day called to one of the most sacred & solemn Offices of the holy Church of Christ— the confering the Order of Deacons on, I trust, a worthy candidate for it. May the divine grace & Holy Spirit ever accompany him, & make him both a worthy & a successful minister in the Church of Jesus the Redeemer — protect him from dangers & distresses of body & mind, & through the sanctification of the heart, fit him for endless happiness in the everlasting kingdom of God the Father.

On this occasion it may be of use to him who hath now been set apart for the service of God, to point out the duties & importance of the Office to which he is called, that being convinced of its excellency, & feeling the weight of duty which rests on it, he may the more diligently set himself to fulfil it, & may be induced to beg earnestly, by fervent & constant prayer, the strength & protection of the blessed Spirit of God, that he may, with a ready mind & will, ever behave himself as becometh the venerable station in the Church of Christ to which he is advanced.

This may be also of use to us. Seeing the weight of the Clerical character, & the exact obligations which lie on it, we shall be convinced that the weaknesses of human nature are insufficient to discharge it aright, & shall be induced to look with candour on every thing which appears to come short of duty in those who hold it, to put up our daily prayers to God for them, that he would strengthen & conduct them by his Spirit, so that they may faithfully do their duty in all things, to the edification of the Church, & glory of the holy name of Jesus.

Before we enter on the direct consideration of the text, let us employ our meditations on the institution of the holy order of Deacons. We shall thereby become sensible of its divine origine, & of its importance & dignity in the Church.

Its origine was from the first Apostles of Christ, acting under the influence & inspiration of the Holy Ghost. From the dictates of God communicated by his

Spirit, therefore, this Office arose. The occasion was the complaints of the Greeks that "their widows were "neglected in the daily ministration" of the relief of the Church, when they had all things in common, & distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.

These Greeks were proselytes to the Jews religion; & having been converted to Christianity, had given up their substance to the common stock of the Church, & now complained that their widows, who, perhaps from age & infirmity, could not make a daily & earnest application, were neglected in the daily supply w.ch they had a right to expect.

The apostles were sensible that this complaint ought to be redressed. They, therefore, directed seven men to be chosen by the christian brethren, "men of honest "report, & full of the Holy Ghost & wisdom", whom they might appoint over that business". When this was done the apostles "prayed & laid their hands on them", & thereby ordained them to the Office or work for which they designed them. In conſequence of this regulation, "The word of God increased & the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly" (Acts VI—)

If we consider the qualifications required in those Deacons, that they should be "full of the Holy Ghost & wisdom", & take into the account the solemnity of their ordination, we cannot suppose, that to deal out the stated allowance of the Church to its members could be the whole of their Office. An established character for honesty & discretion would have been a ſufficient security for the faithful discharge of that busineſs. And if we pay any regard to the history & practice of the Church from its earliest age, we shall find that Deacons were ever considered as one body of the Clergy, & aſsisted the Priests & Bishops in the ministration of divine ſervice, especially in the celebration of the holy Eucharist.

In the Acts of the apostles we find that two of these Deacons, & the only two who are mentioned after their Ordination, Stephen namely & Philip, wrought miracles, & preached, & baptized; both converting men to Christianity & admitting them into the Church. Accordingly the Church not only declares it to belong to the Office of a Deacon to take care of the poor of the parish where he serveth, & where provision is so made; but also 'to aſsist the Priest in divine ſervice, especially when he ministereth the holy Communion, '& to help him in the distribution thereof; & to read 'holy scriptures & homilies, that is, ſermons' in the 'Church; & to instruct the youth in the Catechism; 'in the absence of the Priest to baptise infants; & 'to preach, if he be admitted thereto by the Bishop.' None, I trust, who consider the nature of the Office, the authority of scripture, & primitive practice, will venture to find fault with the Church on this account.

Under these circumstances, you will not be ſurpriſed at the exact care of the Church in requiring the Bishop to demand of every Candidate for Deacons Orders, whether he trusts that he is inwardly moved 'by the Holy Ghost to take upon him this Office & 'ministration? That is, Are you on good grounds persuaded that you are led to seek the Office of a Deacon by no improper & unchristian motives, but from an honest view to serve God by promoting his glory in the edification of his Church?

Having now attended to the origine of the Office of Deacons, & being, as I hope, convinced of its dignity & importance in the Church of God; Let us next attend to the qualifications that ought to attend the ministration of it. These are noticed by St. Paul in the text. He saith that "Deacons must be "grave, not double-tongued, not given to much "wine, not greedy of filthy lucre", but they must "hold the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.

1. A Deacon must be *grave*. For,

If he be admitted to an Office instituted by the holy apostles under the immediate inspiration of the Spirit of God, & intended for the edification of the body of Christ, gravity will most aſsuredly be a strong feature in his Character. The sacred origine of his office, the important duties which belong to it, the solemn promises he made when he was admitted into it, concern for the souls of those among whom he serves, the glory of God & his Redeemer, the ſalvation of his own soul, are all grave & solemn subjects, & most nearly concern him. Effectually must they guard every one who hath any ſeriouſneſs about him, from that levity & trifling disposition, which, if they shew not the abſence of all ſober & good principles, are, at least very disgusting in a Clergyman.

By *gravity* I mean not a sullen & morose disposition which too frequently invades religious people, making them sour & peevish at all the little gaieties of life. Cheerfulneſs of conversation, even on innocent subjects, is sometimes branded as profaneneſs, & made the marks of a reprobate mind. Above all men a cheerful heart & mind become the pious Christian. His sense of his redemption from sin & death, & of the preſence of the Holy Spirit of God always with him; his certainty of the remiſsion of sins by the blood of Jesus, his hope of future glory in body & soul, in the everlasting kingdom of God, must be a constant source of joy & serenity to him.

These things, & all the dispensations of Gods providence work together for his good. They lead him to, & prepare him for that eternal weight of glory, which, after the resurrection of his body, he is to receive in the kingdom of his Redeemer. This he knows, & is therefore ever ready to comply with the requisition of the Gospel, & for these things to give thanks.

But not only for these things, in every thing he is to give thanks, because it is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning him (1 Theſs. V. 18) A thankful heart he will, therefore, always maintain before his God, under all circumstances & contingencies of life. But a thankful heart cannot subsist without some degree of cheerfulneſs. A holy joy in the love of God is therefore, a principle trait in the good Christians character, & will shew itself in quietneſs & cheerfulneſs in all the circumstances of his ordinary life.

The duty of a Deacon will ſometimes call him to attend on the ſick, & poor, & afflicted members of the

Church, to read & explain the word of God in the public congregation, to preside in & direct the prayers & praises which the people of God offer up to him their heavenly King & Father, to administer the holy sacrament of baptism, to assist in distributing the body & blood of a crucified Saviour in the holy Eucharist — These are serious & solemn things, & will temper the cheerfulness of the Christian with a sense of the weaknesses of humanity, of the majesty, power, goodness, & mercy of God, by whom all these things are ordained to lead us to himself, & keep us united to him by keeping us in the unity of his Church, & thereby prepare us for heavenly happiness with him in eternity.

As the duty of a Deacon, & indeed of every Clergyman, requires him to be in constant readiness for the proper discharge of all these Offices, so it obliges him to maintain a constant gravity & seriousneſs of deportment, neither degenerating into sowerneſs & moroseneſs on the one hand, nor into levity & trifling on the other.

There is another interpretation of the Greek word (σεμνὸς) which our translators have rendered, grave, & that is modest, chast (Bp. Fell) And when it is conſidered that Deacons are commonly young men, & that their duty may frequently oblige them to visit the ſick of both sexes, it cannot be thought strange that the apostle should put them in mind of the neceſsity of a decent, & modest, & chast deportment.

2. The apostle saith a Deacon must not be double-tongued.

Some interpretators, particularly Theodoret, understand this as forbidding Deacons to bring away idle stories from the families which their duty hath called them to visit—reporting one thing to one, & another thing to another. Others understand the expression as forbidding fraud & deceit in their general conversation.

But not to be guilty of fraud & deceit is a restriction on all Christians as well as on Deacons; And what St. Paul hath said being directed particularly to them, I must prefer the first interpretation, & understand the apostle as forbidding Deacons & all Clergymen to act a double & guileful part in the families where they visit, saying soft & flattering things to them to gain their esteem & confidence, & reporting tattling stories of them abroad.

This is a wicked practice in all people, much more so in those whose visits have been asked on a religious account—to comfort the sick & afflicted, to instruct & advise the ignorant & weak, to promote the interests of holiness & the salvation

tion of men.

As young people are suppoſed, through levity & inexperience, to be most in danger of falling into this fault, & as Deacons are generally young men, the apostle requires that their manners be seaſoned with gravity & modesty to guard them against this criminal weakneſs: He then directly cautions them against the fault & sin of a double tongue, by which their usefulneſs would be destroyed, their holy religion & office dishonoured, God offended, & their own salvation endangered.

These considerations, it is hoped, will ever dwell on their minds, & on the minds of all Christian people, & effectually prevent their indulging themselves in a practice so odious & disgraceful in itself, & so criminal & mischievous in its consequences.

3. The apostle saith that a Deacon must *not be given to much wine*.

This prohibition lies against the free indulgence of intoxicating liquors of every kind. What the health & refreshment of the body requires Christians are at liberty to use, & the Deacons & Clergy equally so with others. This appears from St. Pauls advice to Timothy in this same epistle, "Use a little wine for thy stomachs sake, & thine often "infirmities;" that is, for thy healths sake.

Very different is that lust of strong drink which the apostle reproves. In every man it is hateful; in a Christian criminal; but in a Clergyman both hateful & criminal. It disqualifies the body for the offices of humanity, much more for the duties of religion; And for the proper discharge of these a Deacon ought to be ever ready.

Every Christian, & more particularly every

Clergyman, professeth to act under the constant guidance & inspiration of the Holy Spirit of God: Without his heavenly influence they confess they are unable to do any thing that is good in itself, or acceptable to God. On this account it is, that they are required to restrain & mortify the unruly appetites of the body & sinful passions of the mind, that they may obey the motions of the Spirit of God in righteousness & true holiness. But how can a Clergyman attend to those motions? how comply with them, if his body be inflamed, his passions fired, & his reason disordered by strong drink?

Odious as this vice is, & destructive to every thing that is good, it ought not to surprise us that Clergymen who have been dedicated to God to be expended in his service, should sometimes fall into it. Not to mention that as they are men they are subject to the same appetites & infirmities with others, probably their studious & sedentary life exposes them to the temptation of making too free a use of spirituous liquors, as much as the fatigue & weariness of the labourer. Languor of body & spirits are frequently the consequences of their mode of life; And when it is found that a little spirituous drink effectually & speedily relieves from that weariness & dejection, it is too frequently applied to; till habit & the increase of quantity bring on a customary & extravagant indulgence.

A prudent man will, therefore, guard himself against every approach of this temptation. Bodily exercise is the best remedy against languor from a sedentary life. And besides that it a remedy sure in its effect, it contributes to the health of the body & the clearneſs of the understanding.

4. Another prohibition of the apostle is, that a Deacon must not be *greedy of filthy lucre*; That is, say the old commentators, He must not seek to make gain by low & sordid arts, nor by mean & base compliances.

Such is the unhappy disposition of human nature, that men are sometimes found base enough to endeavour to make the influence of their Clergyman contribute to the ſucceſs of their own unworthy schemes. On those occaſions a Clergyman should remember his duty to God & his Church, & not endeavour to increase or secure his living by courting the favour of the rich or the powerful by mean or wicked compliances. He serves a master who is higher than the highest, more powerful than the most mighty, whoſe providence is over all his works, who ſent his ministers forth into a wicked world as lambs among wolves, but who will protect them if they put their trust in him, & faithfully do their duty to him.

In another ſenſe is the prohibition, not to be *greedy of filthy lucre*, to be regarded by the ministers of God. They may be placed in ſituations which scarcely afford the neceſsaries & decencies of life. Let them remember that all Christians, & they in particular, are called to a state of worldly poverty, & that they ought to be examples to their flocks of that renunciation of the world, & poverty of ſpirit to which calls them. They must, therefore, bear the wants & inconveniences of life with patience & resignation to the will of God, whose ministers they are, & who will do what is best for them.

From such a state, however, it is natural to wish deliverance. But let them beware that they descend not below the dignity of Gods ministers, nor engage in any schemes of bad report to help their needy circumstances, lest they destroy the usefulness of their sacred character, & make shipwreck of their faith & dependence on God, as well as of a good conscience.

These four particulars the holy apostle hath thought proper to mention, as being incompatible with the character of those who are admitted to the Order of Deacons. They, therefore, who are so admitted must straitly guard themselves against all temptations to either of them. And that their efforts may be successful, they must remember that their whole dependence is on God. Their own strength cannot help them, for it is weakness. Their own wisdom & prudence cannot save them, for they are folly & rashness.

If they would stand secure, it must be by the engine of earnest & constant prayer to their heavenly Father, that he would guide & support them by his Spirit, to avoid the corruptions of the world, & to serve him faithfully in his holy Church to the end of their life.

One qualification of Deacons which the apostle hath mentioned, though different from thoſe we have considered, is equally neceſsary with them, that the man of God may be throughly furnished for his whole duty; It is that they "hold the mystery of the "faith in a pure conſcience".

The mystery of faith is the Gospel of Christ. Unleſs they *hold* it — believe it & understand it, — how shall they preach & explain it to others? And unleſs with a pure conſcience they practice its duties, how will it appear to others that they themselves believe what they preach? Or how can they stand as patterns to the flock in faith & holineſs? Their duty, therefore, that they do sincerely believe the whole system of Redemption by Jesus Christ, that they study its doctrines so as to be able to explain to others all things necessary to eternal life, that practise its duties, so as to make themselves patterns to others in all the holiness & purity of the Christian life, & that they be so much in earnest in this matter, that they lay aside the study of the world & the flesh & draw all their care & study this way.

The last direction which the Apostle gives in the text is, that they who are to be admitted to the Order of Deacons be first proved; that is examined, with regard to the innocency & examplariness of their lives, their knowledge & belief of Christs religion, & their ability to teach it to others. Being found blameless & irreproachable in these matters, they are to be admitted to the holy Office, that they may discharge it in the fear of God, to the edification of his Church,

&

& their own salvation.

This direction of the apostle hath, I trust, been this day complied with. By the best judgment we can make, the person ordained hath come prepared with innocency of life, & competent knowledge of our holy religion to make him a worthy minister in the Church. And that he may be a successful one, we rely on the presence of the Holy Spirit of God to direct & support him, to sanctify his heart with holy fear & divine love, that when he hath finished faithfully his course in the Church of God, he may be a companion meet for the Saints in glory.

And now, having heard the duty & qualifications of the Deacons & Ministers of the Church of Christ, ask yourselves how they ought to be treated by you. The time will not permit me to continue this discourse much longer; nor do I imagine it is necessary that I should. Your candour will however bear with me while, in a few words, I discharge my duty, by mentioning two or three instances of your duty to the ministers of Christ.

1. The duty of the people requires that they give them a decent support. If they have spent their youth in qualifying themselves, by human literature, to become ministers & preachers of religion; & when they enter on their task are obliged to decline the more profitable businesses of life that they may draw their cares & studies to their heavenly employment, & minister spiritual things to you, even the word of God, & the sacraments of his Church, it is certainly no great matter if they do reap some of your carnal things — the necessaries & decencies of life.

2. The duty of the people requires that they

reverence & respect the ministers of Christ, especially those who conduct themselves agreeably to their holy calling — if not for their sakes, yet for his sake whose servants they are. Our earthly governors are honoured & respected, though they only minister to us in temporal things which must soon end & come to nothing. Most reasonable, therefore, is it that they should be treated with respect, who, by the appointment of God, minister to us the things of eternity which never can end.

3. The duty of the people requires them to attend to & regard the things of the kingdom of God which their ministers declare to them & inculcate on them; & that they follow their good example in holiness of life. It is to be hoped that Christs ministers preach nothing but the truth as it is in Jesus, & that they live carefully as his Gospel directs. On this ground only I speak, because for this end God hath appointed them. This then is their reasonable duty, &

what God expects of them. That we may judge of their doctrine & of their life, God hath given us his holy word, to be in both these respects a light to our feet, & a lamp to our paths.

4. The duty of the people towards the ministers of Christ also is, that they pray earnestly & daily for them, that God would be with them & guide them by his Spirit in all truth of doctrine & holineſs of life; that he would bleſs them by his providence & make their labours conducive to their eternal welfare.

This in truth is the end of all religion — eternal felicity in Gods kingdom. To obtain this, all our prayers, all our endeavours, the whole conduct of our lives should be directed. For this end God established his Church, appointed his ministers, instituted his ſacraments & all the means of grace & holy living — to guide us in they way that leadeth unto life eternal.

And now I have done. To Gods grace & protection I commit you; & beg of him to bless & keep you — to guide you by his grace & Holy Spirit through this world of sin & sorrow, & bring you to his own heavenly kingdom of endless happiness & perfect glory, for Jesus Christs sake. Amen.

N. L. 3 Easter/95.
N. Haven, June/95

The Christian Soldier.

Eph. VI. 10, 11.

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, & in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

That the Christian life is often compared to a state of warfare, no one can be ignorant who has redde the New Testament with attention. The enemies against which we are to fight, are the devil, the world, & the flesh. Our adoption into the Church by holy baptism, is our inlistment under Jesus Christ the Captain of our salvation, to fight manfully under his banner — the Cross, with which we are then signed — the emblem of victory vitory over sin & death. — That is, under his conduct we engage to renounce & resist these his enemies; no longer to be led & governed by them, but to live according to his directions, by the inspirations of the Holy Spirit.

The first of these enemies is described as the grand adversary of God & man, of all goodness, & peace, & happiness. The world in which we live, the flesh — the present nature which we have, are become our enemies through his agency; & by his management it is that they hurt us.

By the *devil*, we understand the whole host of apostate spirits, who, with their prince, being lifted up with pride, rebelled against God, & fell, from the state of their creation, into malice & every evil temper. Filled with evil themselves, they have ever endeavoured to pervert the creatures of God from their duty, & bring them into the same state of wretchedness & misery with themselves.

Their efforts, we are taught, lie more in wiles & stratagems, than in force & violence. Against the first parents of mankind they exerted their art with fatal success. Through the temptation of the devil they fell into apostacy from God, they corrupted their nature, & made it the great source of sin & misery to all their descendants.

The world in which we live, & about which, by the permission of God, the evil spirits have, at present their residence, through the fall of man, became disordered & unfriendly to him; not only by its inclemency & tendency to his mortality, but by gratifying & delighting the appetites of his body, now rendered extravagant & corrupt, it excited & inflamed the malignant paſsions of his mind.

From the ruin of sin & death into which human nature had unhappily fallen by the instigation of the devil, Christ came to deliver it, by making atonement for sin, & by forming men to the practice & habits of goodneſs & holineſs; that by renewing in them the temper of heaven by the operation of his Spirit, they might become capable of heavenly happineſs, & obtain it through his mediation.

For this purpose he established his Church in the world; instituted its government, Sacraments, doctrines, & laws, & endued it with the presence of the holy Spirit. — That men, renouncing their apostacy & sins, might be transplanted out of the evil world into his Church; & being bred up under the guidance of his Spirit, & in obedience to his government, might become fit inhabitants of his kingdom in heaven.

Hence arises the neceſsity of resisting & fighting against the devil, & all the enemies of that salvation which Christ hath purchased & offers to us; of withdrawing ourselves from all intercourse with the great enemy of God & goodneſs; of renouncing all sin & wickedneſs; of withstanding all temptations of the devil, the world, & the flesh; of avoiding every thing that is in opposition to the holineſs & goodneſs of God; & of cherishing all tempers & dispositions that render us like in goodneſs & holineſs.

As we have no power of our own to do this, seeing our nature is corrupted, & of itself inclined to evil, our whole strength or ability to resist the enemies of our salvation must be from God. Therefore the holy apostle directs the Christians of Ephesus to "be strong in the Lord, "& in the power of his might".

All our strength is from the Spirit of God in us. This Spirit is "the power of his might". To "be strong in the Lord, & in the power of his might," is, therefore, to rely & depend on his Spirit for help to oppose the enemies of our salvation, to abide by his motions & follow his inspirations within us. These motions & inspirations in pious wishes & devout affections of the heart, in the love of all goodness & holiness, according to the will & commandments of God, & in the denial of all evil of every kind & degree.

Under the conduct, & in the strength of this almighty agent, we must resist stedfastly every temptation to sin — that is, every inclination to do what God hath forbidden, or to leave undone what he hath commanded; to bear with patience all afflictions & persecutions that come upon us, trusting to the gracious Spirit of God to support us under them, & when he shall see it best for us, to deliver us from them; relying on the goodness of God to make up to us in a blessed immortality, all the trials & sufferings which we here endure in obedience to his will.

That we may do this effectually, the apostle directs us to "put on the whole armor of "God", that we may be able to stand against "the wiles of the devil" — that we may be able to detect & frustrate the deceits with which he endeavours to beguile us, to avoid the snares with which he attempts to trap us, & to defeat every contrivance which he meditates against us.

To make us sensible of the necessity of arming ourselves with the armour which God hath provided for us, St. Paul observes that "we" Christians wrestle not against "flesh & blood". Wicked men who corrupt the truth with false doctrines & heresies, & beguile unthinking & heedless Christians into destruction; who destroy the unity & peace of Christs Church by schisms; "who torment the faithful servants of God by bitter revilings & persecutions, are not, it seems, our only, nor our worst enemies.

But, we wrestle against principalities, "against power" — such high & mighty powers as Christ triumphed over by his cross — "against the rulers of the darkness of this world" — those wicked spirits who still rule & govern the heathen nations yet in darkness, & all those who rejecting the Gospel choose to remain in darkness "because their deeds "are evil"; against spiritual wickednesses in high places — against those evil spirits who inhabit the regions of the air, collectively called "the prince of the power of the air, who rules in the children of disobedience", & leads them "captive at his will".

Seeing this enemy is of such mighty power, the apostle repeats his direction, "Wherefore take "unto you the whole armour of God". — Take all those defences against temptation & sin, with which God hath provided his faithfull servants; "that ye may be able" to ward off & repel the assaults of your spiritual enemies, & "to withstand their fiercest assaults" "in the evil day" of temptation & persecution. And having done all to stand "Stand, therefore; having your "loins girt about with truth".

In the eastern countries where they wear loose garments, the girdle is a necessary part of the habit, especially for soldiers & servants. By it their clothing was kept tight about them, so as not to impede their motions, & the muscles of the body so braced as to be capable of greater & quicker exertions.

The girdle which Christian soldiers are directed to brace about their loins is truth. By truth St. Paul generally means the Gospel; And his meaning here is, that a firm persuasion of the truth of their religion, an undoubting belief of its doctrines & principles must be to Christians what the girdle is to soldiers — keep them ever ready & alert to resist that roaring lion who goeth about seeking whom he may devour.

In addition to this girdle — this firm faith of the Gospel — the Christian must have on "the breast-plate of righteousness". The breast-plate was calculated to defend the heart from the darts & daggers of the enemy. Righteousness is ~~that~~ to the Christian, what the breast-plate was to the soldier.

Righteousness means means the doing of our duty to God & man, according to the best of our knowledge & power — the governing our lives by the rule of Gods commandments, & honestly making them the standard of our conduct, both to him & to our neighbour.

The sure consequence will be peace of conscience, & confidence towards God & man. And peace of conscience will secure the heart & mind against uneasy reflections & foreboding apprehensions, as the soldiers breast-plate defended him from the danger & smart of his adversary's weapons.

The expression is taken from Isaiah, Ch. LIX. 17. & is by the prophet spoken of Christ — "He put on "righteousness as a breast-plate, & an helmet of "salvation on his head". And Christs soldiers are, by his apostle, directed to do as their Captain in this spiritual warfare did through obedience to God — arm themselves with that good conscience, which will give them confidence in God, support them in the day of trouble, & procure them the esteem, & love, & compassion of all good men.

The next direction to Christian soldiers is, to have their "feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace." Anciently military shoes were not only calculated to defend the feet in marching, but they came up the legs almost to the knee; & being guarded with plates of brass or iron, secured the legs both from injuries in rough ways, & from the weapons of the enemy. — This is the meaning of the greaves of brass upon the legs of Goliath.

In the language of the scriptures, to be shod, means to be in readiness for the journey we are about to undertake. The Israelites were directed to eat the pass-over paſsover in Egypt "with their shoes on their feet", in readineſs to march out of that country, when God should give the word. Our Saviour, when he was sending out his apostles to preach, ordered them to be "shod with sandals", that they might readily execute the orders he gave them.

The Gospel is called the Gospel of peace, both on account of that peace with God which it proclaims to the penitent, & because it commands Christians to live in peace with one another, & to cultivate peace with all men.

The phrase, "the preparation of the Gospel "of peace", is obscure. The Greek word ἑτοιμασια, signifies as well readineſs, as preparation. The apostles meaning therefore is, that in order to be properly equipped for our spiritual warfare, we must be ever ready to shew to all men, the confident hope of peace with God through Christ which we enjoy, by our readiness to "live peaceably with all men"—provoking none needlessly, but shewing all gentleness, & meekness, & long-suffering.

This conduct will secure the Christian from many galling & vexatious occurrences in his journey through life; as the soldiers shoes defended him in his marches from the roughness of the roads, either naturally so, or made so by his enemy to hinder his progress. "Who will harm you if ye be followers of "that which is good"? Who will injure the peaceable man, who provokes none, but is gentle, & good, & kind to all?

(Be it then our earnest care, well beloved, to regard the admonitions of this holy apostle & faithful minister of Jesus Christ. If we wish to acquit ourselves as good soldiers in this spiritual warfare, reason requires that we use diligently all the means of defence which our Captain hath provided for us, & obey all the directions which we receive by his authority. In no other way shall we remain unsubdued by our artful & mighty enemy.

While we neglect the God of our salvation, & depend on our own strength, like soldiers unarmed, marching to attack a well appointed enemy, we shall be soon borne down & vanquished. The ~~power~~ of his almighty arm who giveth the victory thro' Jesus Christ our Lord can only be our defence — can only be our salvation.

The Christian soldier.

Part II.

In the verses after the text, St. Paul enumerates the particulars of that armor of God, with which he had directed the Ephesian Christians to invest themselves, that they might be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. The several articles of this spiritual armour are, the girdle of truth, the breast-plate of righteousness, the preparation of the Gospel of peace for the security of the feet, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, the sword of the Spirit, that is the word of God. The three first of these particulars I considered in the morning. I come ~~now~~ to)

The next direction which the apostle gives.

— "Above all, taking the shield of faith, where-"with ye shall be able to quench all the fiery "darts of the wicked" — of the wicked one, the devil.

The soldiers shield was carried on his left arm, & borne before him. It could be easily moved, so as to guard all parts of his body from the strokes & darts of his enemy. As its use was confined to no particular part, but served for general defence, it was above all necessary for the soldier to have his shield, which, in some degree, supplied the place of any other armour of defence he happened to be without.

What the shield was to the soldier, faith is to the Christian. An apostle hath told us that "faith is the substance" ~~of their confident expec~~tation — "of things hoped for, the evidence of "things not seen."

Consider well this definition of faith, & you will at once see how, like a shield, it covers & secures the Christian against all the assaults of his spiritual enemies.

All our hopes of future blessedness are founded on the promises of God. The confident expectation, therefore, of receiving the good things which God hath promised stands on his truth. He cannot deceive. He will, therefore, perform the word that is gone out of his mouth. He is almighty, all-powerful, all-wise, all-gracious, therefore, able & willing to make his promises good

All these perfections of his nature are evidences to us of the truth & reality of what he hath promised, though we see it not. By our faith we behold it, & are as sure of its existence as though we saw it with our bodily eyes; as certain of receiving it as though we held it in our hands.

This being the nature of faith, consider next how it must operate under all temptations from our spiritual enemies. Do persecutions, & afflictions, & troubles of this life assault us? faith assures us that God is able to support us under them, to deliver us from them, to reward us for them, & that he will do so when he sees it best for us. Do the desires of worldly riches, or the cares of this life perplex us? faith informs us, that if we renounce the world & cleave to God, the riches of his kingdom shall be ours; that if we seek his righteousness, all things necessary to our bodily sustenance shall be given to us. Do bodily pleasures excite our appetites to enjoy them? faith turns our attention to the pleasures reserved at Gods right hand for those who mortify the body & keep under its evil propensities. In all situations it interposes its powerful defence, wards off, or renders harmless the assaults, & quenches all the fiery darts of the wicked one.

His darts, or assaults are called *fiery*, not only on account of the persecutions to which Christians are exposed from the malice of wicked men excited by the *evil one*, & the material fire which has been often employed to torment & destroy their bodies; but also on account of the violence & rage with which that *evil one* makes & continues his secret as well as open assaults.

Highly necessary, therefore, was the emphatic direction of the holy apostle to the Ephesian Christians — "above all" that had gone before, to take the "shield of faith", because it is faith which enables us to repel the assaults of the enemies of our salvation, & giveth us the victory over them. For "this "is the victory that overcometh the world", the flesh, & the devil, "even our faith".

The next piece of spiritual armour with which the apostle directs Christians to arm themselves, is "the helmet of salvation". — The breast-plate defended the vital parts of the body. The helmet secured the head, the seat of the senses, of the reason & understanding, & the origine of all bodily motion.

The expression is taken from Isaiah, & hath been cited. It means that the hope of the Christian will be to him, what the helmet is to the soldier — it will cover his head in the day of battle — The aſsurance that if we "fight the "good fight of faith", there is reserved for us an immortal crown of glory, which God the righteous judge will give us in the day when he shall award the inhabitants of the world according to their deeds — that he who cannot lie or deceive hath promised "him who overcometh to "eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of "the paradise of God" — "to eat of the hidden manna" — "to be a pillar in the temple of God" — will, like a helmet, guard the head against the strokes of temptation, preserve the spiritual senses in full vigor to discerne between good & evil, & make the Christian alert to follow all godly motions "in righteouſneſs & true holineſs", according to the will & good pleasure of God.

Another article of spiritual armour mentioned by the apostle, & by him joined with "the helmet" or hope "of salvation", is "the sword of the Spirit, which" saith he, is the word of God."

The other armour mentioned by him is merely defensive; but the sword serves both for defence & assault. And in both senses is the word, the scriptures of God; the Christians sword in his spiritual warfare. The successful, deep-wounding strokes of the enemy, are the temptations which lead us into sin. If they fail of this, though they may alarm & trouble us, they hurt us not.

See in David the use which good men make of the word of God as a defence against sin. "Thy "word have I hid in mine heart, that I might "not sin against thee". The word of God treasured up & digested in the heart, will be ready for our use when temptations assault us. Being the ground of our faith & hope, it will then prove the only defence of our integrity.

Would you know the full use of the sword of the Spirit, the word of God, learn it from him who best knew its force, & how to direct it, the Captain of your salvation, your leader & example in your spiritual warfare, Jesus the Redeemer. With his most artful temptations, & proposed in their most specious forms, the evil one assaulted him in the wilderness. However artful & specious his temptations were, the sword of the Spirit repelled them all, & drove him vanquished from the ground.

The example of Jesus is recorded for our imitation & encouragement. If with simplicity of heart, & upright intentions we follow it, we shall not fail of success whenever assaulted by the powers of darkness. The sword which Jesus wielded, when in the hand of his faithful soldier, inspired & supported by the Spirit of holiness, will forever repel & baffle all the devices of satan.

The last weapon which the apostle mentions, or rather the qualification which is to crown his warfare with success is "prayer & supplication in the Spirit". The meaning of this direction is, that Christians should be constant & earnest in their supplications to Almighty God, that he would endue them with his holy Spirit, that he would enable them faithfully to put on & use the armour he hath provided for them — all the means of grace & holiness, & that he would defend & deliver them under all temptations.

There

The Christian soldier.

There are so much said of the efficacy of prayer, so many promises made to it, so many commands to constancy & fervency in it, in the bible, that it seems superfluous to point them out to a christian congregation. Permit me however to bring to your recollection the command of St. Paul to the Theſsalonians, to "pray without ceasing". That is to be constant in the habit & practice of it, never to let any stated or occasional opportunities to paſs unregarded.

The bleſsed Jesus spake a parable to this end, "that men ought always to pray, & not "to faint", or grow weary of so important a duty. Though he may be supposed to have been under leſs neceſsity of prayer than any of his followers can pretend to be, he yet frequently retired to solitude, that he might acquit himself of a duty proper to his humanity. And in his agony in the garden, the fervency & earnestneſs of his prayer, though continued in the same words, exceeds the utmost efforts of the human mind.

Could Christians be brought back to the constant practice of devout prayer, there would be little difficulty of recovering in them that holy life, which so brightly shone in the first disciples of Jesus. But while this neceſsary means of holineſs is so generally neglected, little hope remains that Christians will ever return to that eminency of virtue & goodneſs which their religion has so direct a tendency to produce. Reflect, I beseech you, on this subject; & may God inspire you with resolution to correct in yourselves what is so very much amiss in generality of Christians.

But it is not for ourselves only that the apostle directs earnest prayer & supplication to be made to God. Supplication is also to be made for all saints; that is, for all who believe on the Lord Jesus.

Intercession for others, especially for the faithful servants of God, is a duty we owe, not only to them, but to ourselves also. St. James hath told us that the prayers of a righteous man avail much. Would we wish our prayers to be heard, we must, therefore, not only be constant & fervent in them both for ourselves & for others, but we must follow after holiness, & endeavour to transplant every divine temper & virtue into our hearts, lest our prayers be abomination, instead of an acceptable offering unto God.

To his direction that supplication be made for all saints, St. Paul adds his request to the Christians at Ephesus, that they would pray particularly for him. If we consider the reasons on which the duty of Christians to make intercession for each other is founded, they will be found especially to oblige them to pray for their ministers — that God would preserve them from all dangers in preaching the Gospel of Christ; that he would remove all difficulties from before them, & enable them to do it with fidelity & diligence.

I have now gone through an exposition

on of the text, & of some verses subsequent to it. The use I wish to make of it is to impress you with a strong sense of the duty of Christians in this spiritual warfare; that they are not merely idle spectators of its progress, but soldiers enlisted under the banner of Jesus, & obliged to fight manfully as he hath directed.

Why should the Thessalonians have been commanded to put on the whole armour of God, but because it was necessary for them? & in what sense could it have been necessary but to enable them to resist the enemies of their salvation with success. Either the Christian life does require as much watchfulness & care, exertion & vigour, attention & courage, as a life of war with temporal enemies, or there is little sense in this discourse

course. Yet we cannot suppose him to have been unacquainted with the state of Christians in this world, the danger they were in of being deceived by the devil, beguiled by the world, & seduced by the body, so as to fail of attaining the happiness provided for the faithful servants of God in heaven. Nor can we suppose he hath made any unnecessary alarm about it.

Be persuaded then to attend to his directions. Put on the armour of God, & be ever ready to use it, when his providence calls you to do so. For why put on this armour if you are never to use it? "Resist the "devil, & he will flee from you", said this same apostle. In the scripture before us he hath taught us with what arms we are to resist him—

him — the girdle of truth, the breast-plate of righteousness, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, the sword of the Spirit, that is, the word of God, & prayer.

But there is no promise that he will flee from you unless you resist him; nor that you shall be victorious over him, but in the faithful use of this spiritual armour. This armour God hath appointed for your defence against the wiles & power of the evil one; therefore is it called "the armour of God". In the use of it, he will direct you, & help you, & bless you; & make you more than conquerors through him who hath loved & redeemed you, Jesus the Son of God.

But if you live as too many Christian professors do live, careless & inattentive to a future world, pursuing every gust of pleasure, every glimpse of interest, come from what source they will, instead of fleeing from you the devil will abide with you & lead you captive at his will, to final impenitency in this world, to endless misery in the world to come.

If you wish to avoid this dreadful state, comply faithfully with the directions of the holy apostle — gird up the loins of your minds with a firm, undoubting persuasion of the truth of the Gospel, & particularly of the divine nature or God-head of its adorable author — fortify your hearts with that good conscience which arises from obedience to God, according to your best knowledge & ability — support yourselves under all the persecutions, afflictions, troubles, & other temptations that come upon you, by your *faith*, your firm trust & confidence in the power & goodness of your heavenly Father, that he will protect you under them, & deliver you from them, in his own good time; when he sees it best for you — keep up your courage by meditating often on the greatness of that salvation which is promised to the faithful; to those who endure to the end; & on the certainty of their obtaining it — study the holy scriptures diligently, that you may draw from them arguments & reasons to confirm your faith & enliven your hope; & knowledge & courage to defeat the arts, & resist the temptations of the evil one — be always ready to do the will of God, & to cultivate peace & good will with all men, by doing them all the friendly, benevolent actions in your power. ~~Kn~~ Knowing that of yourselves you are not able to do these things, pray instantly, & fervently, & constantly to Almighty God, Father, Son, &

& Holy Ghost, the One God of Christians, for yourselves, & for all mankind, for those especially who hold the pure faith of Christ in a pure conscience, & are animated with the same blessed hope of everlasting life through him, which animateth you.

Thus fighting the good fight of faith while you continue in this world, you shall, in the world to come, obtain eternal life, through the same Jesus Christ, who, with the Father & the Holy Ghost, is ONE GOD, blessed forever. Amen.

2 Easter — /95. New Haven, Stratford, Derby, Woodbridge 111

1795 June. Newport

The omnipresence & omniscience of God.

Psa. CXXXIX. 7.

* Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?

The design of this Psalm is to acknowledge & celebrate the omnipresence & omniscience of God; thereby to dispose the heart of man to virtue, & preserve it in uprightness & purity; that he ~~it~~ may be able to abide the scrutiny of his Judge, when he shall search the hearts & disclose the thoughts of all men at the last day.

No motive can possibly have greater force to retain the heart in the habits of holiness, & keep it in constant obedience to God, than the certain persuasion, that He who made us is ever present with us — that He who formed the heart, knows all its motions & intentions — that He who gave the power of thought to man, knows the thoughts which man indulges — that He who endowed him with ability to will & to choose, knows the tendencies & determinations of that will & choice, however secret their turnings, or intricate their workings.

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* See Hornes Commentary on the Psalm.

"Such knowledge is", indeed, "too wonderful "& excellent for us". We can neither attain to it ourselves, nor comprehend how it is in God. But that God does poſseſs it, does exercise it, Who can doubt? He made the eye, & shall He not see? He formed the ear, & shall he not hear? He gave the ability of knowledge & action to man, shall He then not know his thoughts, & what he does.

He knoweth all the thoughts of men, & spieth out their ways. Their thoughts, indeed, ere they are formed, their words before they are uttered by the tongue, are known perfectly to him with whom they have to do.

How serious is this consideration! how solemn! how awful! Solemn & awful as it is, seldom do we attend to it, or sin would soon be banished from among men. We can not sin in security, but in some place where God can not behold us. And where is that place?

He made all things, & his presence fills all places. He is about our bed, & about our path, & understandeth our thoughts ere we can mature them, & seeth our actions ere the heart hath resolved on them.

"Whither," then, "shall we go from his presence? Could we climb to heaven; behold heaven is the throne of his glory; there he dwells in Majesty ineffable. Could we pass the bounds of the ocean, & go to the utmost limits of the creation; the whole creation is his work; every part of it the scene of his providence & care. Could we descend & dive in the grave; lo, the grave is also the theatre of his power. There he reserveth the dust of the dead, & thence, in his own time, will he again raise it to life. Shall we shroud ourselves in darkness, & try to escape his eye in the vail of night? He made the night as well as the day; to him they are both alike; his eye pervades the one as easily as the other.

Vain is the attempt to hide any thing from God. Every thing is manifest to him. Our disguised intentions, our secret thoughts, equally so with our open actions; our private sins as much so as those which impudence commits in the face of the sun.

Accustom yourselves to this consideration; meditate frequently on it; impreſs yourselves with a full sense of the constant presence of God with you. Scarcely would it be poſsible for you to commit any wilful deliberate sin, if you recollected that God saw you; or to entertain impure wicked thoughts, when you considered that he discerned the very centre of your soul, & noted every thing in which you was concerned.

Before God you could not do, or think, what you would blush to have known to a child of five years old. Yet from the child you have nothing to fear. But God sees & regards all that you do, & say, & think; & unless your repentance, thro' the merit of the blood of Jesus, shall erase your sins from his book, he will, one day, before men & angels, openly reveal them, & bring you into judgment for them.

This sense of the constant presence of God with us, his perfect knowledge of our thoughts & intentions, as well as of our words & actions, will not only be a security & guard against sin & temptation; it will be also an incitement to works of righteousness, & a support and comfort under the adversities & sorrows of life.

If we are never out of the presence of

our Creator, we never can be out of his protection. Ever with us he can assist us in our distresses, support us in persecutions, comfort us in adversities. He knows, for he sees all that we suffer for his sake, all that we endure in submission to his will, & will remember & reward us accordingly.

The piety & charity you have practised in secret, the fervor of your private devotions which had no witness but God, the pain & labour you patiently endured because it was Gods will, when no mortal eye beheld, the misery inflicted by the malice of evil men, when no human help was at hand, the self-denial of bodily evil appetites & passions, that you might reduce body & mind into subjection to the will of God, are all under his immediate inspection, all noted by him against the day of recompence, when he will reward every man according to his deeds, & will give eternal life to those who by patient continuance in well doing seek for it.

There is a sentiment arising from this subject for which I am indebted to the pious Bishop Horne, & introduce it here, as it can not fail to support the faith, enliven the hope, ~~hope~~ of the dying Christian, & administer the sweetest consolation to him, when worldly hopes are like shadows passing fast away.

That his body shall rise again from the grave in Gods appointed time, & with his spirit be made partaker of the glory of heaven, is one of those gracious promises which the Redeemer hath made to him. He would therefore wish that the dust of his body might rest quietly in its grave, undisturbed by impious or unthinking men, till God shall call it to life.

Regardless of religion, of their own souls, of the concerns of eternity, inconsiderate men too often forget that the body is the creature of God, the redeemed of Christ, the heir of life eternal, as well as the soul: that the body of the Christian was sanctified by baptism to be the temple of the Holy Ghost, & is united to Christ by being a member of his body; that it hath been fed with the bread of God at his table, & thereby nourished unto life eternal.

Inconsiderate men, I say, are apt to forget these things, & to treat the dust of the deceased Christian, with as little reverence as the dust of a beast, yet the believer in Jesus knows, & may comfort himself in the assured hope, that He who caused his beloved Son to descend into the lower parts of the earth, & thence to ascend again to heaven, that they who believed in him might not perish in the grave, but might rise to everlasting life — He will watch over his dead body, will preserve & reassemble every part of it, though dissolved in the earth, buried in the ocean, or scattered to the four winds of the world.

In allusion to this glorious event, he may, with just propriety & holy joy, apply the words of the text — "Whither shall I go "then from thy presence"? If, as to my spiritual part, I ascend up to heaven, to paradise, the place thou hast prepared for the souls of the faithful departed, Thou art there to receive me. If, with respect to my body, I go down to hell, the grave, behold thou art there to secure me. If I take the wings of the winds am carried with the velocity of the light, into the midst of the ocean, to the utmost verge of creation, there thy hand shall hold me, thy right hand shall preserve me for a joyful resurrection in thy appointed time.

Comfort your hearts, beloved brethren, with this consideration. Let it give strength to your faith, energy to your hope, & triumph to your joy; that if you continue faithful till your death, you shall sleep in Jesus. Your spirit shall rest in the bosom of your Redeemer. The dust of your dead body shall be preserved by his power. When He shall appear in his glorious Majesty to judge the quick & the dead, he will bring your spirits with him, restore to every spirit its own body — glorious, immortal, changed into the similitude of his own glory & immortality. Reunited forever, no more to part, soul & body shall triumphantly, in his train, enter the kingdom prepared for them, & as members of his body, shall partake of his glory & blessedness for ever & ever. — "O Death, where is "thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? "Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, "through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, "my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, un"moveable, always abounding in the work "of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that

your

omniscience of God.

"your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

There are somethings so exceedingly affecting in the remainder of this Psalm, which so strongly call forth the faith, & hope, & love of the pious Christian, uniting all the powers of his soul & body in obedience to God; that, though the consideration of the text does not directly require it, I can not help asking your patient attention to a short mention of them.

Who can unmoved, unastonished, unedified, contemplate the ~~[illegible]~~ circumstances on which the Psalmist grounds the belief of the special & constant presence of God with us? "My
"reins are thine; thou hast covered me in the
"womb; my bones are not hid from thee, tho'
"secretly made & fashioned. Thine eyes did
"see my substance, even while it was yet imperfect;

"imperfect, & according to the model written in
"thy book, were all my members fashioned
"day by day, while yet there were none of them
"completly formed."

Astonishment confounds the human mind at the bare recital of these circumstances. Attend to what naturally follows from them & be instructed — behold, admire, reverence the power & knowledge of God.

He who formed the heart & the reins, gave vigour & thought to the brain, perception to the mind, sense to the body — can he be ignorant of what passes within us? He who framed the fabrick of the bones, covered them with flesh & skin, & made the blood to circulate through the body — according to the determinate model delineated by his own will — can he want power or knowledge to rebuild & reanimate the body when destroyed by death?

"Fearfully & wonderfully are we made" into this world. Fearfully & wonderfully shall we be made into the world to come. Marvellous are the works of God; there is no end of their greatness.

How dear are the counsels of God! how precious his operations to the children of men! "If I tell them, they are more in number "than the sand. When I wake up", from sleep or from death, "I am present with thee".

Sleeping or waking, living or dying, alive or dead, God is ever present with us. Nothing can escape his knowledge, nothing elude his notice. He is "a discerner of the "thoughts & intents of the heart. Neither is there "any creature that is not manifest in his "sight. But all things are naked, & opened unto "the eyes of him, with whom we have to do".

O love the Lord your God; fear him all ye faithful believers; magnify him all ye chosen ones, & declare the wonders that he doeth for the children of men.

The consideration of this ſubject naturally led the Psalmist, where it ought, my friends, to lead us — to the contemplation of the different estates of good & bad men with regard to Almighty God. For if he sees all our thoughts, is acquainted with all our ways, beholds all our works — for what end? Aſsuredly that he may make that distinction in his final judgment between good & evil, which he now makes by the poſsitive laws of his revelation, & by the decisions of conscience. He will, therefore, bring every deed & thought into judgment, & deal with men according as their lives have been.

To him it belongs to save those who obey him. To him also belongs the retribution of the wicked. Under this impression he exclaims, "Surely thou wilt slay"; that is, thou wilt punish "the wicked O God." His hatred & detestation of those who hate & oppose God, who delight in oppression & blood, who revile God, & take his name in vain, are openly & avowedly declared.

The duty of a faithful servant requires that he regard the interest & honour of his master; that he respect his friends & renounce his enemies. Hear the Psalmist on this subject. "Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee? am "not I grieved with those that rise up against

"Thee? I hate them with perfect hatred; I "count them mine enemies."

To hate as God hates, not the persons but the sins of men; not what he made them, but what they have wickedly made themselves, is no way inconsistent with the law of charity. Charity requires that we love the persons of all men, even of the wicked; that we pray for them; that we do them good; especially that we try to reform, & restore them to the favour of God. But charity requires not that we love their vices, or countenance their evil practices.

On the contrary; Duty requires that we be very careful that our love for wicked men with whom we happen to be connected, do not lead us into those vices & sins which they practise. And it ought to be a general rule of our conduct to all men — not to let our love for any man, however worthy he may be in other respects, however much we may be obliged to him, to lead us to do, on any occasion, what God hath forbidden, or to omit what he hath commanded. It is better to have God your friend, than man.

As David began this instructive Psalm, with declaring that Jehovah had "searched & "known him", so he concludes it with a petition that he would continue the same mercy to ~~t~~ him; "Search me, O God, & know my heart; "try me, & know my thoughts; see if there be "any wicked way in me, & lead me in the "way everlasting."

Can we, my friends, imitate the holy Psalmist, & with him put up this petition to God? Are we so desirous to have our hearts purified from all evil, & made fit to abide the judgment of God, as to be willing to submit to his discipline, to abide his trials, to endure his correction, that he may lead us in the way to everlasting life? Happy for us if we are. For who can search & cleanse the heart? Who can correct its evil propensities & tempers? Who can purify the soul from the defilements of sin? Who can restore it to the divine favour, but God only? None but He who is the way, the truth, & the life, can lead it to peace & salvation.

Submit then to the good pleasure of God. Be content that every thing should be as God pleases. Be persuaded that you are then in your best state, when his will is done ~~in~~

you, in the same unreserved manner that it is done in angels in heaven — when you submit to it, & rejoice in it as they do.

Various are the methods which God uses to accomplish this purpose — all accomodated by his wisdom & goodness to the various tempers & conditions of men. The calm motions of his Spirit, the dispensations of his word & sacraments, the events of his providence — Whatever best seperates the pure gold from the dross, & most most effectually calls us home to our heavenly Father, is best for us, tho' it were the furnace of affliction. Suppose God sees that afflictions will best try our hearts & thoughts, reclaim us from any wicked ways, bring us home to himself, lead us in the way to life everlasting — afflictions are then best for us, & ought to be received with thankfulness & endured with joy.

So we be cleansed from sin, no matter by what process. So we be purged from dross, & formed into vessels of honour fitted for the masters use, sanctified & prepared unto every good work, we need not regret the fire of the furnace to which we are indebted for our refinement.

Be this then the prayer of our hearts— "See, O God, if there be any way of wicked-"ness in me, & lead me in the way everlast-"ing." Amen.

5 Easter. 1788.

Sunday after 1 Jan. 1795

Doing the word of God.

James I. 22.

Be ye doers of the word, & not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

St. James employs some verses before the text in describing & recommending the dispositions of mind & preparation of heart which will dispose us to receive the "word of truth" — the Gospel of God — with advantage. His design is to convince us that the hearing this word of truth in the most attentive manner, will be insufficient to give us a title to its blessings unless we conform ourselves to its precepts, & do the things which it commands.

In the beginning of the Epistle he puts Christians in mind of the great variety of temptations & trials to which their present nature & situation in the world exposed them. He warns them that thoſe temptations would be strong, & violent, & dangerous to their faith & virtue; & tells them, if they resisted manfully, they would overcome them through Gods help, & make them a source of bleſsedneſs. "Bleſsed "is the man that endureth temptation; for when "he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which "the Lord hath promised to them that love him."

But however sharp the trial may be, however strong the temptation, however adverse the event, "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am "tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with "evil, neither tempteth he any man." There is no evil in God; none can approach him; none can tempt him. He can not, therefore, produce evil in others, nor tempt them to it.

St. James then proceeds to open the true origine of temptations to evil, that we may watch over it, & guard against it. "Every man is tempted, when "he is drawn away of his own lust, & enticed."

Lust means every disposition or propensity to sin, whether it arise from the appetites of the body, or the depraved disposition of the mind, or conjunctly from both.

We did not receive the irregular ſensual appetites of the body from God, nor the depraved dispositions of the mind; nor did he originally place us in a body & world, which subject us to so great & manifold dangers & diſtreſses as we daily feel. They came on us by sin — by the departure

ture of our first parent from that state in which the goodneſs of his Creator had placed him. "God made man man upright, but "they have sought out many inventions". He gave him a body superior to the elements of the world, & a mind pure & perfect. He made him in his own image, the model of his own divine nature, the representative of his own majesty & glory on earth.

"Thou," O God, "madest man him a little "lower than the angels" — a little while lower than the angels — "thou crownedst him with "glory & honour; thou didst put all things "in ſubjection under his feet — all cattle, & "the beasts of the earth; the fishes of the ſea, "& the fowls of the air. O Lord our Governor, "how excellent is thy name in all the world!"

But man, as hath been observed, kept not this state of his creation. He departed from the law of his Creator, & "sought out many inventions". Renouncing the order of his nature, & the commandment of his God, he brought sin into the world, & all our woe — pain, & infirmity, & disease, & death of the body; intemperate desires, & malevolent paſsions of the mind; barrenneſs, disorder, confusion & uproar in the natural world; which still continue to break forth in the fury of wild beasts, unfruitful seasons, blastings, mildew, devouring insects, storms, tempests, inundations, lightning, thunder, earth-quakes. And what is worse than all theſe, in the raging passions of men; So that the most exact government, the severest laws, & the most exemplary

punishments are not sufficient to restrain them from cheating, robbing, persecuting, devouring, killing & murdering each other.

Remember, my friends, God made not man thus. "He made him upright, but they have "sought out many inventions". And all these evils are the natural & necessary consequences of their own inventions. They all descend to us from our natural birth, & not by the appointment of our Creator, who by the dispensations of his providence, by the illuminations of his grace, by the mediation of his Son, is constantly endeavouring to deliver us from them. But children must partake of the nature of their parents, & when Adam had brought them on himself, he brought them, of course, on all his posterity.

Under this necessity of nature we live, subject to all the natural & moral evils which our first parent brought on himself. They come not on us from the arbitrary appointment of God, but from our natural birth. Hence arises the necessity of our being tempted in this world. Nature will strive to gratify its own desires, to pursue its own inclinations, to indulge its own appetites. And these desires & appetites being contrary to the will of God, contrariety & opposition between his laws & our nature must ensue.

These desires & propensities to evil are what, as I before observed, the apostle calls *lust*. "Every "man is tempted when he is drawn away of his "own lust, & enticed". That is; When the desires & appetites of his nature excite him to transgress the laws of God, then is a man tempted. But in being tempted there is no sin. That temptations come upon us is our misfortune not our fault. It is only when we approve & consent to the temptation that it becomes criminal.

"When lust hath conceived"— hath obtained our good liking & acquiescence in the temptation—"it bringeth forth sin; & sin, when "it is finished, bringeth forth death." That is; when the outward act, to which the temptation led us, is completed; or the will so engaged in the perpetration of it, that nothing but opportunity is wanting to complete it; more especially, when customary practice hath rendered it habitual, sin bringeth forth death— it deserveth, it renders us liable to death, the wages or natural consequence of sin. Death here must mean the punishment of sin — the condemnation of God inflicted on the sinner on account of his sin. For if you restrain the meaning of the word to temporal death, you make no distinction between those who resist, & those who comply with the temptation, those who sin & those who do not. All are equally liable to temporal death, & all undergo it.

The apostle concludes this part of his Epistle with a most earnest caution to his readers, "Do not err my beloved brethren" — Be not guilty of so foolish, so extravagant, so fatal an error as to ascribe your sins, or your temptations to sin to Almighty God. Do not imagine that he can any way, or in any degree, be the author of sin, either by giving you those lusts which entice you to sin, or by placing you in a state of subjection to them, or by leaving you unsupported under them. On the contrary, all good comes from him, & no manner of evil. "Every good gift, & every "perfect gift, is from above, & cometh down from" him who is "the Father of lights" — of the light of nature, of the light of conscience, of the light of the Holy Spirit — & "with whom is "no variableness, neither shadow of turning." He varies not in his love to the children of men, nor does he turn from good to evil. He will not, therefore, deny the light & power of his Holy Spirit to those who ask it of him, nor with-hold his favour from those who love & obey him; much less will he tempt any man to sin, or lead him away from the path of his commandments. For,

"Of his own will begat he us", who were Jews, "with the word of truth", the preaching of the Gospel of Christ, "that we", the Jewish converts to Christianity, "should be a kind of first-fruits "of his creatures"— The first-fruits of his new creation in Christ Jesus, & the earnest & pledge of the great conversion of the Gentiles to the faith of Christ.

Can we then suppose that by forcing, or tempting us to sin, God will destroy the life to which he hath begotten us with the word of truth? or deny us any thing necessary to preserve that life which he hath freely, of his own good will bestowed upon us? That would suppose God to frustrate his own work; to render void his own intentions.

The inference the apostle draws from his discourse is this, "Wherefore my beloved brethren", being regenerated by the word of truth, & made the children of God, as well as we the first-fruits of the Gospel, "let every man be swift to hear", & ready to attend to & obey the Gospel, & grow & increase in that new life to which ye are begotten by the free will & good pleasure of God. And that ye may be the more ready & the better disposed to hear & be taught the truth as it is in Jesus, be ye "slow to speak". Affect not to become teachers of it, till you are duly called & appointed thereto; or to set up your own opinions, or endeavour to propagate your own notions & systems; or to explain the deep misteries of our holy religion.

But be "slow to wrath" — avoid especially all angry contentions about religion.

Into this error vain & conceited men, fond of their own abilities & of hearing themselves talk, are apt to run. Remember therefore that the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. Disputations & contentions about religion increase wrathful dispositions & angry resentments among men; but they obstruct that faith by which the Christian works righteousness, & becomes acceptable unto God.

"Wherefore lay apart", not only all wrathful dispositions, but also "all filthiness" — all the lusts of sensuality, every thing which can tempt & draw you into sin & defile the soul — all "superfluity of naughtiness", the licentiousness of the tongue, & whatever can irritate you to speak evil of your neighbour; & receive with "meekneſs the ingrafted word, which is able to "save your souls". Only into the meek & humble heart, purged of lust & paſsion, can the divine word of truth, the Gospel of Christ be so planted, as to grow & bear fruit unto life eternal. And that you may thus receive the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls, remember the apostles direction, "Be ye doers of the word, & not hearers only, deceiving your own selves".

What hath been said may serve as a comment on the apostles discourse preceding the text; & which describes the state of mind, or disposition of heart, proper for receiving the word of truth, the Gospel of Christ. The text

&

& subsequent verses describe that state of heart, & conduct of life which make it effectual to that blessed purpose. They prove that doing what the Gospel commands is full as necessary to salvation as believing what it declares.

This must be so agreable to the common sense & reason of mankind, that it is hard to conceive any one should have any doubts about it. However, we find that attachment to a preconceived favourite system, or to a party, will sometimes call even so obvious a truth into question. The word of truth, or the Gospel, is not only a declaration of the mercy of God to a sinful world, but it is a system of laws to regulate the conduct of men in this world. It points out to them how they are to live, under the conduct of the Holy Spirit, that they may become righteous & holy, & fit for his kindom of blessedness & glory.

How the mere hearing of the Gospel should answer any good purpose, unless it excites & leads to that holy obedience which its laws require is not easy to conceive. Strange, therefore, is that eagerness in most people to hear sermons. I call it strange, because, if you judge by what appears, the whole business ends merely in hearing with the ears. The heart has little to do with it. Practice is seldom thought of.

Could the design of Christianity be answered by hearing two sermons every sunday, this conduct would be just & reasonable. But while the end of preaching is to instruct &

& correct; & the end of instruction is practice, of correction, reformation, to stop short at bare hearing, without benefiting by the instruction & correction of preaching, is but deceiving ourselves, if, by it we expect to recommend ourselves to the acceptance of God.

The same observation may be applied to reading the bible. Many people seem very devout in doing it, & to labour hard in it. But if you look for the fruit of their reading in the conduct of their lives, you will look in vain, unless, in lieu of better fruits, you take up with texts of scripture, & scripture phrases, thrown out with little understanding, & too often in opposition to their real meaning. But as to what the bible directs them to do, it is quite another matter. It is religion enough for some people to read the bible.

The apostle compares such hearers, & by parity of reason, such readers also, to a man who having looked at himself in a glaſs, goes away, & immediately forgets what sort of an appearance he made. The glaſs certainly could do such a man no service. Its use is to shew the face & dreſs, not that we may contemplate their beauty, but see that there is nothing amiſs in them, or which makes them improper or unfit for the company in to which we are going. But if a man will not correct what his glaſs informs him is amiſs, or directly forgets what appearance he made, it would have been just as well had he never looked into it.

So, saith the apostle, is the man who hears the word & does it not. The word of truth discovers to him the deformities of his mind, the depravity of his heart, the errors of his judgment, the perversity of his will, the sins of his life; & directs him how to correct & reform them, that he may be prepared to stand before God, & be made a companion mete for the saints in glory.

But if he thinks no more of these things than just while the word of truth was before his eyes, or sounding in his ears, & then thinks no more what manner of person he is, how unfit to endure the judgment of God, he might as well have been employed in any other manner. He does but deceive himself in supposing that barely hearing will recommend him to the favour of God. To obtain his favour, we must be doers as well as hearers of the word of truth — not only look in the glaſs of God's law, & see, but remember what manner of persons we are; how much, & in what instances we have transgreſsed his will, &, imploring his forgiveneſs, & the presence & almighty power of his Holy Spirit, endeavour to correct & amend whatever we find to be wrong in us.

Nor may we doubt of ſucceſs in our endeavours, if we be faithful & persevering in them. For "whosoever looketh into the "perfect law of liberty, & continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, "this man shall be bleſsed in his deed" — in his doing ſo.

The Gospel of Christ is called "the perfect law of liberty", because it perfectly delivers us from the burden of the law of Moses, & from the servile spirit which that law introduced; It endows us with the glorious liberty of the sons of God, with the bleſsed gift of the Holy Spirit. It frees us from the guilt & power of sin, from the everlasting dominion of death, & from eternal misery. The gift of the Holy Spirit is also a principle of holineſs in us, by which we are enabled to obey God, whose service is "perfect freedom", & to "perfect holineſs in his fear".

But remember, that to accomplish these happy purposes, you are not only to look into this perfect law of liberty, but you are to continue therein — not be forgetful hearers of it, but doers of its work, or you will deceive your own selves, & miss of that blessedness which the apostle hath promised.

St. James proceeds to instance one particular, which people who look into the perfect law of liberty, are too apt to disregard. Instead of supposing it to be criminal with God, they not unfrequently suppose it to be acceptable to him, & that is the licentiousness of the tongue "If any man among you seem to be religious, "& bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his "own heart, this mans religion is vain".

The precepts in the Gospel relating to slander & evil speaking are numerous, & I hope properly regarded by those who wish to obey God. But many people who appear to have the honour of God & of his holy religion at heart,

heart when they think these are insulted, are apt to break out in bitter expressions of fiery zeal, in imprecations & evil wishes against those who they think probably are the enemies of God & the truth.

This is the temper which I suppose St. James here reproves, which he represents but as a deception of the heart, & as rendering all pretences to religion but vain & useless. A wrathful, restless, over earnest spirit in religion, however good its object, will do us no service with God. It will beget ill temper, contention, & evil speaking, which God hath forbidden. And it will kill meekness, & peace, & love, which God requires, which are indeed the temper of heaven, the foundation of future happiness.

How much more criminal must this conduct be, in the present unhappy division of Christians into parties & sects! Too much do those divisions destroy unity, peace, & love. There is no need of adding the licentiousneſs of the tongue to heighten their deadly consequences — deadly to the temper & spirit of Christianity.

Should it ever be neceſsary for you to defend the holy religion you profeſs, or give a reason of the hope that is in you, you will, I trust, be ever ready to do it. But I beseech you, let it be done in meekneſs, without reviling, & without anger. The too common practice is, to endeavour to render an adversary odious, to stir up popular resentment against him. Misrepresentation, & calumny, & evil speaking become necessary, & candor & truth, & love are forgotten. Avoid this unchristian conduct. Truth, not party, ought to be your aim & your guide, & peace & love must rule your hearts; or else know that your religion is vain.

"Pure religion, & undefiled before God", even "the "Father" of our Lord Jesus Christ, is seen in the works of benevolence, & mercy, & charity; it leads all who are under its influence to do good to all according to their ability & opportunity — to visit the fatherless & widows in their affliction, that they may administer relief & consolation to them in their distresses. In this respect this is to *do the word*; & is very different from the mere hearers of the precepts of benevolence & charity which the Gospel contains. They shew their religion not by doing those precepts, but by much talk, great professions of godlineſs, bitter censoriousneſs, fiery zeal, disputatious contentions about matters in which religion is not concerned, &, too often cruel imprecations on those who are not of their ſentiments & ~~party~~ party.

Another matter in which pure & undefiled religion will shew itself is, that the perſon influenced by it will "keep himself unspotted from the world" — neither pursuing that covetous disposition which the world inspires, nor being puffed up with that pride & arrogancy which riches tend to produce, nor with that ostentation & oppreſsive disposition which too generally attends a proſperous condition in this world, nor indulging himself in sensual pleasures which are constantly ly soliciting his enjoyment, & with which the weak & unprincipalled minds of those who are only hearers & not doers of the word are apt to be caught.

From the whole of what the apostle hath said, it appears that what he calls the *word*, is a term of large extent. Nor can it be otherwise. For if by the word is meant the Gospel of Christ, doing the word must mean obedience to the whole Gospel. To *do the word* then is to obey the Gospel _ to believe its declarations, its threats, its promises, to comply with its institutions, & fulfil its precepts.

The mere hearer may in some sense believe the the Gospel. But if he leaves its duties unfulfilled, & expects from his mere hearing to obtain the favour of God, he deceives himself with the shadow of religion, & builds his hopes on false ground. Or if he practise some of the duties of Christianity, it will probably be those to which he is, by natural constitution, inclined, or from which he hath no aversion. But this at best is but partial obedience, & arises more from self-gratification, than from duty to God.

It is also an unhappiness that some persons mistake great vices for Christian virtues, & give themselves credit for tempers & habits which they ought to correct & reform. The miser & covetous man, for instance, cordially renounce the pleasures of luxury & dissipation, & are therefore very apt to esteem themselves very self-denying good Christians.

The profligate debauchée will excuse himself because he is not a miser, but has a heart to circulate his wealth, & assist in giving bread & raiment to the poor. But is the miser, or covetous man, or the spendthrift a good Christian? or obedient to the Gospel of Christ? a doer of his word?

If we look into the glass of God word, the Gospel of Christ, with proper attention, we shall easily perceive; not only the difference between Christian virtues & those vices which put on their semblance & sometimes usurp their names; but also that his word must be *done* as well as looked into or heard.

We shall also perceive that every part of it must be done; not because it suits our temper or fancy, but because it is his will. To give up our own taste & opinion, & in all things to be governed by what God hath commanded, must at last be the touch-stone of obedience. To consult our own taste & convenience, & obey no further than they shall lead us, is not to submit to God, but to make his laws submit to our inclinations. "I hold strait" said David, "*all* thy commandments, & all false "ways"– ways not justified by Gods word–"I utterly abhor".

To deserve the character of *Doers of the word*, it is necessary that we attend to the spirit of God's laws, & obey them according to that, as well as according to the letter. To this the apostle had reference when he calls the Gospel "the perfect law of liberty". Not that it leaves us at liberty to live as we please, but because it discarded those servile motives to obedience which sanctioned the laws of Moses. But having made us the children of God thro' Christ, & fello-heirs with him of the heavenly inheritance, it exacts from us the cordial & dutiful obedience of children — obedience springing from love – a hearty desire to please him who, of his own free will, hath begotten us by the word of truth to this new life of spiritual children in Christ Jesus.

Great is the difference of principle from which obedience flows in a child & a slave. The child obeys from love; the slave from fear. The child that he may please his parent; the slave that he may avoid punishment. The child will therefore extend his obedience to all cases, & continue it under all circumstances; the slave only so far only as to escape anger.

This seems to have been the case with the generality of the Jews. They considered only the literal meaning of the law, & scrupulously adhered to it, & then thought themselves free from all fault. As to any reward from God, they trusted to their descent from Abraham, & on his account, expected every thing that God could do for them.

Something similar seems to be the case with many Christians. They confide in a fancied election, & in what Christ has done for them, so literally, that if they be hearers of the word & great talkers about it, they suppose all will go well with them — Christs righteousness will be imputed to them, cover all their defects, & make up for their deficiencies in doing what the word plainly required of them.

But if Christ hath extended the precepts of the moral law beyond their literal meaning, & hath declared that unless our righteousness shall, in this respect, exceed the righteousness of the scribes & pharisees, we shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven, we must extend our obedience as far as his law extends, that is, both to the letter & spirit of it; or we must take our place among those who are only hearers of the word, but not doers of it.

Nor must we suppose ourselves doers of the word, unless we persevere in our obedience. This is intimated by the apostle when he saith, "He that looketh into the perfect law of liberty, & continueth "therein", & draweth not back from the faith & practice of the Gospel; "he being not a forgetful "hearer but a doer of the work, this man shall be "blessed in his deed".

The same reason there is why we should obey God to day, will be a good reason why we should obey him tomorrow, & so on as long as we live. Otherwise we shall be like the stoney ground, whose seed indeed sprung up quickly, but as quickly withered away for lack of moisture.

Our duty therefore requires that we examine ~~of~~ our hearts, & see whether our obedience be grounded on the love of God, & rooted in an impartial regard to all his commandments. And let us guard ourselves against the deception of paying only an external regard to the Gospel of Christ. Its laws demand our obedience. If we be hearers of the word without being doers of it, we deceive ourselves, & our religion is vain.

Remember, then, that pure & undefiled religion will shew itself in unreserved & continued obedience to God, in abstaining from the defilements of the flesh & of the world, & in practising all the duties & virtues of the Christian life.

1 Sunday after the Epiph. 1794.

Sermon the first.

The wise-men.

The Epiphany, 1784

Matt. II. 2.

Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have ſeen his star in the East, & are come to worship him.

The Festival which we this day celebrate is called the Epiphany. a word of Greek original, & signifying *manifestation*, or *appearance*. At first the nativity of Christ was called by that name, & was celebrated twelve days, the whole time being called the Epiphany, or manifestation of Christ in the flesh. Afterward the word became appropriated to the

[illegible]

manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles in the *Wisemen of the East*; which happy event is celebrated in the Church on the thirteenth day after the Nativity.

Who those Wisemen were, & from what country they came, has been matter of much inquiry. The word in the original is *Magi*, *magicians*. The present meaning of the word in our language is bad; In that country & time it signified much the same with *philoſopher*, or aſtronomer.

They probably came from Arabia, a country bordering on Judea, & peopled by the deſcendants of Abraham; part of it by the poſterity of Ismael, & part by the children of Ketura.

This circumstance will aſsist us to account for the conduct of these men, in coming to pay their homage to him who was born king of the Jews. They must have heard of the promise to Abraham

Bp. Seabury's
Ms. Sermons
arranged by
himself –

Some dates of
preaching marked.
but the sermons are
not generally dated –
I conjecture that
they were written (or pos-
sibly in some cases re-written
from former MSS.) between
1784 & 94 – at any rate after
his consecration – Wm J

ham, that in his *seed all the families of the earth should be bleſsed*; & from their intercourse with the Jews they could not be ignorant ~~of~~ that they daily expected ~~expectation of~~ the birth of this promised seed, their king Meſsiah. Probably they themselves looked for this bleſsing of all nations which had been promised to Abraham, & might think themselves the more interested in his coming, as they were Abrahams deſcendants.

~~Some have suppoſed these Wise-men came from the same country, or near it, from which the queen of Sheba came to visit Solomon; & that she made that journey with the same view, in hopes of finding the bleſsed seed promiſed to Abraham; for she was also deſcended from him.~~

Should it be inquired what that star was which occasioned the journey of the wiſe-men into Judea, I ſee no absurdity in suppoſing it to have been that splendour, called the glory of the Lord, which shone round the shepherds of Bethlehem, at Christs nativity. That this was not a natural, but a miraculous light is certain. God had made use of it to excite the attention of the shepherds who were Jews to the birth of their Redeemer. Why should he not have made it serve a double purpose? & excite the attention of the Gentiles also to his birth, who was to be the light of the Gentiles, as well as the glory of Israel: Especially if we consider them as the deſcendants of Abraham, acquainted with, & expecting the bleſsing promised to him.

From their intercourse with the Jews they would also learn, that this promised seed was to be a king who should rule the world; for under that character the Jews looked for him. From them too they would learn that the prophets had pointed out that time for his appearance, & that their whole nation were anxiously looking for him.

The wise-men, as I have observed, were astronomers: and astronomy was then in high reputation. They who cultivated the science, paid a constant attention to the motions of the heavenly bodies, & gave notice of their changes & different aspects, to those who were employed in the culture of the earth, that they might conduct their affairs accordingly. They could not therefor easily fail to observe the splendour of that light which hung over Judea at the nativity of Christ; they could not be ignorant that it was a preternatural appearance; they knew it to be the common opinion of the world, that the appearance of extraordinary stars & lights portended grand events, & particularly pointed out the birth of extraordinary persons. If, under their circumstances, they supposed the light they beheld, which at a distance might appear as a star, or compact splendour hovering near the earth, pointed to the birth of that great king whom the Jews expected, & whom, by tradition from their progenitor Abraham, they were also taught to expect, why should we be surprised? Or why think it strange, that under this impression, they should set out in all haste, to pay their homage to him, in whose blessing they hoped to have a full share with the rest of the world?

God, we know, was graciously pleased to give notice to the shepherds of the birth of the Saviour Christ, by a miraculous light, & the voice of an angel from heaven. God is the God of all flesh; of the Gentiles as well as of the Jews. Christ, his salvation, was *prepared before the face of all people, to be the light of the Gentiles, as well as the glory of Israel*. Is there then any absurdity in supposing that as God explained the occasion of this light to the shepherds by an angel; so he also explained the meaning of it, by a particular revelation to the wise-men? or that he should prompt them by his Spirit to go & pay their adoration to the new born king of the Jews, the seed promised to Abraham for a bleſsing to him & to all nations? In this I see nothing more extraordinary than in a thousand other things which the goodneſs & mercy of God hath done for us.

Let us then proceed in our conjectures, keeping the sacred history of this transaction close in view, as a direction by which to steer. And let us further suppose, that excited by an extraordinary star, or light in the heavens, the wise-men set out immediately for Jerusalem. The surprise they there caused by their inquiry, *Where is he that is born king of the Jews? for* we in the east have seen his star, & are come to worship him, may more easily be imagined than described.

It is not improbable that the wonderful things told by the shepherds at Bethlehem, had, by that time reached Jerusalem. Can it be a wonder, that the inquiry of these strangers coming directly on the report of the shepherds, should fill Jerusalem with amazement? or alarm the jealousy of Herod? God who brings good out of evil, made Herods jealousy give information to the pious inquirers. That he might find the infant whose birth filled him with anxiety, & have an opportunity of destroying him, he called the priests & learned men together, & demanded of them Where Christ should be born? They answered, At Bethlehem Judea, to distinguish it from another Bethlehem in the tribe of Zebulon: And quoted for it the prophecy of Micah (V.2) *And thou Bethlehem in the land of Judah, art not the least among the princes of Judah; for out of thee shall come a governor, who shall rule my people Israel.*

It ought to be observed that the words in the prophet stand thus; *But thou Bethlehem-Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me, that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting*, or from eternity.

But let it be noted that Bethlehem & Ephratah are two names for the same place. This appears from Gen. XXXV. 19. *And Rachel died, & was buried in the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem.*

To reconcile the expressions, *The princes of Judah*, & *The thousands of Judah*, we have only to recollect that the militia of the Israelites was divided into thousands, & that the officer who commanded one of those thousands, was called the prince of that thousand; So that the princes of Judah, & the thousands of Judah, mean just the same thing.

Similar

(note)

+ Similar difference of expression between the writers of the Old & New Testaments are not uncommon, & arise from this circumstance; Some years before the time of Christ the Hebrew scriptures had been translated into Greek. This translation came into common use with all the foreign Jews. They generally understood the Greek language better than the Hebrew. It had~~ing~~ become the common language of a great part of the world, whereas the Hebrew was confined almost intirely to Judea. This universality of the Greek language seems to have been the reason why the New Testament was written in that tongue. It made the scripture ~~it~~ intilligible to a far greater part of mankind than any other language could have done. The authors of the New Testament writing in Greek, quoted the Old Testament from the Greek translation, & not from the Hebrew Bible. This has made some variety between the Old & New Testaments of our Bible, where the latter cites texts from the former; but very little, generally no difference is made in the sense, in any point of moment. ~~To return to the wise-men.~~

Having obtained the intelligence they wanted, they set out for Bethlehem, when, behold, the star, or light they had seen, again appeared, & went before them till it fixed itself over the house where the holy child was: So graciously did God again interpose for their encouragement & direction. When they came into his presence, they fell down & worshipped him, & presented gifts to him, gold, frankincense, & myrrhe.

The old Christians always understood this worship of the wise-men to be divine adoration, & the gifts they presented to be offerings made to him as God. It is however to be acknowledged that the word we translate *worship* means civil homage,

mage, as well as divine adoration: And the phrase we translate *presented gifts*, is the same with making offerings to God. Both these expreſsions ſeem to be used by the Evangelist in a ſacred ſense, & so the primitive Christians understood them. On their authority, as well as on the authority of other paſsages of scripture which aſcribe divinity to Christ, I should suppose that the wise-men, by divine admonition, *adored*, & *made offerings* to the young child *as God made man*.

The history of the transaction which has been before us, has, I know, been ridiculed by infidels, as an inconsistent, improbable story. Without troubling you with a particular enumeration of difficulties, I have brought the circumſtances of it together, in ſuch a way as they may reasonably be ſupposed to have happened, without departing from the account the holy scripture gives us of it: And, I flatter myself, if the particular interposition of God for the salvation of the Gentile world be not incredible, there is nothing incredible in the story. If the Gentiles needed not the interposition of God, or if it was improper for God to afford his interposition, & open to them the means of salvation, objections may lie against this history. But the man must be more hardy than wise, who will affirm either the one or the other.

The strongest objection seems to lie against the time allowed for all the incidents of the story to happen. But the history does not say the wise-men came from far, but only from the East. I have mentioned the probality of their coming from Arabia, which lay to the eastward & southward of Jerusalem. The two countries indeed joined; nay part of Arabia lay within the land of Canaan. That the wise-men were persons of wealth appears from their presents. None but persons of wealth indeed could have leisure to pursue the studies of philosophy & astronomy. They could not therefore want the conveniencies of traveling. The kind of camel called the dromedary is common in that country, & is said to be remarkable for its expedition & ease in traveling, & for its patient endurance of fatigue. The Arabian horse we know is celebrated for his speed on the ground, either on a journey or in the race. Either of these animals must have been at their command; nor can we suppose they would make any unnecessary delay on their journey.

Under these circumstances, we must suppose that twelve or thirteen days were enough for them to come a long journey to Jerusalem, have the opinion of the priests & scribes concerning the place where Christ should be born, & go to Bethlehem. A few hours was time enough for Herod to assemble the priests; & alarmed & jealous as he was, it is not likely he delayed the matter a moment. The answer of the priests was ready: they needed no consultation, for the words of the prophet are plain;

plain, & the distance from Jerusalem to Bethlehem is not more than eight miles.

As we have every reason to suppose that the Church fixed the celebration of the Epiphany to the real day on which the wise-men made their appearance at Bethlehem, so we see there is sufficient time between that day, the sixth of January, & the twenty fifth of December, the day of Christs nativity, for all the circumstances of the history to have happened.

There is therefore nothing in the history of the wise-men but what may be fairly accounted for on the principles of human reason, except the miraculous interposition of almighty God in favour of the Gentile world. This interposition of God will be no bar to the faith of the pious Christian. He knows that the redemption of man by Jesus Christ is one continued series of miraculous goodness & mercy; & will be no more surprised that God should, by a star, guide the wise men to the rising of the sun of righteousness,

teousneſs, than that he should announce the birth of the Saviour to the humble shepherds by the voice of his holy angel, & the visible display of his own glory.

Let the worldly wise, & the vainly conceited deride these instances of Gods love. Let them pride themselves in the sagacity of their own judgments, & in their superiority of understanding to other people. Be it our part to praise God for his mercies, to love him for his goodneſs, to adore him for the wonders he does for the children of men.

Cathedral

To awaken & strengthen these dispositions, let us next consider the practical inferences which this subjects affords. And,

1. From the example of these wise-men let us learn that a ready disposition to do the will of God is the most acceptable service we can pay him. They no sooner saw the star which announced

ed the birth of the king of the Jews, & felt the impression of God exciting them to pay their homage to him, than their desire to obey his will overcame every obstacle. The length of the journey, the difficulties they might have to encounter, the derision of the world sunk below their consideration. The danger of proclaiming a new-born king in the capital of a jealous prince, had no weight to prevent their fulfilling what God had directed. And God blessed, & protected, & prospered them in their journey. Instead of exposing themselves to the tyranny of Herod, God turned even the suspicious temper of that jealous king into the means of accomplishing their wishes.

How different frequently is our conduct! Convinced of our duty, we hesitate whether we shall comply with it, even when neither difficulty ty nor danger attend it. From time to time we put off our compliance, waiting for I know not what more favourable opportunity. This conduct shews that there is something which stands in competition with God, & prevents our following his will.

Two evils attend this state. It robs us of the approbation & bleſsing of God; & should we ever comply with our duty, it robs us also of a great part of the merit of our obedience.

2. The inquiry which the wise-men made at Jerusalem for him that was born king of the Jews, shews that the star which had led them thither, was withdrawn from them. They then applied for information to the ordinary mode of instruction in the Church of God. And God ſucceeded their inquiry, & gave them all the information which was neceſsary for them.

while

The wise-men.

While they had the presence of the ſtar, they followed its light. It led them to Jerusalem. There the priests & scribes could, from their ſcriptures, inform them where the expected king of the Jews was to be born. They accepted their information, & ſet out for Bethlehem. The star again appeared & led them to the house where the young child was. God thereby not only directing their steps, but attesting to them his approbation of their piety in ſubmitting to the stated means of information in his Church.

Let us from hence learn to attend to the ſcriptures of God in those things which concern our duty, & be ever ready to submit to their direction. The interpretation of the ſcripture they took from the ministers of God in his Church: For, determine as we will about the right of private judgment, which I have no disposition to controvert, God hath declared that *the law shall not perish from the priest* (Jerem: XVIII. 18) But that his *lips should keep knowledge,* & *they,* his people, *ſhould seek the law at his mouth;* because *he is the meſsenger of the Lord of hosts* (Mal. II. 7) To despise the interpretation of ſcripture, & the deciſions of the Church of God & his ministers, is not therefore a matter of such light import as is generally imagined; eſpecially as its natural tendency is division, party, schism, & every evill work, in that holy society whose characteristic property is peace, unity, & love.

When the wise-men saw the star, it is ſaid, *They rejoiced with exceeding great joy.* Let their joy inspire us with gratitude to God, for all the great things he hath done for his Church; & with a ready dispoſition to follow cheerfully wherever his will shall lead us.

3. When these men came into the presence of

Jesus, they prostrated themselves & worshipped him. Let their example teach & encourage us, to prostrate ourselves & worship this heavenly king; now exalted to the right hand of the throne of God — despising the scoffs & sneeres of unthinking men, who deny that adoration to Jesus as God, which these men, under the conduct of divine revelation, so readily paid to him — & remembering that God hath given him a name which is above every name; That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, & things in earth, & things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Philip II. 9 &c) But,

The wise-men not only worshipped, they made their offerings to Jesus — gold, frankincense, & myrrhe — the choicest produce of their country.

× The ancient Christians ſuppoſed that in the quality of their gifts, they, in some degree, deſcribed the object of their worship (See Iren. l.3. c.10) Myrrh, as to a man that was to be delivered to death & the grave for our redemption. Myrrh being a principal ingredient in the embalming of dead bodies. Gold, as to a king, whoſe kingdom was to continue forever. Gold being not only the most precious metal, but the most durable of all earthly substances; not to be corroded by time, nor diſsipated by fire. Incense, as to a God who was made known to them who sought not for him.

† A pious writer of our own Church (Mr. Nelson) suppoſes that theſe offerings of the wise-men represent to us three eminent christian virtues. His words are these; "*Gold*, which is the common "standard of the good things we enjoy, & where-"with we may relieve the wants of the poor, is a "fit emblem for *Charity* & works of mercy, *an odour*

"dour of a sweet smell, a ſacrifice acceptable, well-
"pleasing to God (Philip. IV. 18) And Davids de-
"ſiring his prayer might be set before God as
"Incense (Ps. CXLII. 2) And the prayers of the
"Saints aſcending after the same manner in the
"Revelations (VIII. 4) shews us how fitly our ad-
"dreſses to heaven are repreſented by Frankin-
"cense. And the chief use of Myrrh being to
"preſerve dead bodies from putrefaction, is a
"lively image of mortification, that we should
"present our bodies a living ſacrifice, holy, ac-
"ceptable to God (Rom XII. 1) So that the offer-
"ings of a true Christian should be, out of a pure
"heart, Charity, Prayer, & Mortification".

To pursue this Gentlemans train of thought—
If we would make our Gold, our wealth, an accept-
able ſacrifice to our Saviour, it must be by using
it to the ends for which it was given—in ſupply-
ing

ing maintenance to our families, in satisfying our just debts, particularly in paying readily the labourer his hire, & in relieving the neceſsitous, that the poor may have the full proportion to which justice & charity give them a right.

That our prayers may aſcend up before God as the Incense, they must be offered from pure hearts, with constancy & fervour, with humility & faith. And remember, We cannot be said to ask in faith, that is, believing we shall receive what we ask, unleſs we perform the conditions on which God hath promised to give, & submit ourselves to his pleasure to do what he sees best for us.

That our mortification may be acceptable, we must not only abstain from the outward acts of sin, which strengthen our evil habits, but we must ~~deny~~ curb all evil inclinations, & deny ourselves those occaſions & liberties, which, though they may not be unlawful in themselves, are dangerous to our virtue, by exposing us to temptation, & leading us into sin against God. For then only is the contradicting ourselves in allowable pleasures pleasing to God, when it is intended to subdue sinful desires, that we may not be governed, nor led astray by them, & to make us more perfect in virtue & holineſs.

There is one view in which these wiſe men who were led by a star to Christ ought to be regarded by us, ~~but~~ which has not yet been mentioned. And that is, as they were the fore-runners of the Gentiles, the representatives of their conversion to the religion of Jesus, the first-fruits of that rich harvest which ensued on the preaching of the apostles & martyrs. By miraculously calling them to the knowledge of Christ, God manifested his design to break down that partition wall which hindered the Gentiles from coming into his Church, & to make good all his gracious intentions to them, *in that seed of the woman* he had promised to Adam & Eve under the character of the *bruiser of the serpent*, & to Abraham as his descendant, in whom all the families of the earth should be blessed.

Of this gracious intention of God there are many prophecies in the Old Testament. I shall content myself with mentioning only one of them, & that from the last of the prophets. *From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles; & in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, & a pure offering; for my name shall be* great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts. Mal. I. 11)

Most thankfully then should we commemorate that great bleſsing which occasioned the festival of this day, the manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles. A festival which hath ever been held in high honour by the Christian Church, ſince by his manifestation to the Gentiles they enjoy all the bleſsings of his birth. He brought to man the knowledge of the remiſsion of sins, & of eternal life, & he shed abroad the light of divine truth. To little purpose had this knowledge & light come into the world, if they had not been declared & manifest unto it.

Right, & highly proper is it therefore that the observation of this festival should follow the observation of our Lords nativity. Without the Epiphany, all the bleſsings of Christs incarnation & birth, however

ever great in themselves, or great to others, would, to the Gentiles, have been no bleſsings at all.

To us this matter is of high importance. We are of the race of those Gentiles, to whom, as on this day, the birth of Christ, the Saviour of men, was manifested in the persons of our fore-runners, the wise-men of the East. Then was the wall of seperation, which confined the Church of God to the Jews, shaken to the very foundation, & a view of his salvation opened to the world. Then began the doors of his Church to open themselves to believers of all languages & nations, that entering in when the full time came, they might become the kingdoms of the Lord, & of his Christ.

By Gods mercy & good providence, these bleſsings, when fully completed, were brought down to us, & made our own. By his goodneſs our ancestors were converted to the Christian faith. By his goodneſs

ness the Church in the country from which we are descended, retains that purity of government, doctrine, & worship, which prove her to be a true branch of the holy catholic Church. And by his goodness we this day enjoy the full government, & priesthood, & doctrine, & worship, which Christ instituted by his command, & his apostles & Church have transmitted to us by their practice.

What return shall we render unto the Lord, for all these inestimable blessings? The return of love & faithful obedience, of grateful praise & devout adoration, you will not, I trust, refuse to make. Let your holy, unblamable lives, then, declare & testify your love & obedience. And in adoration & praise to the holy Trinity, for all the blessings which we receive, particularly for those we this day commemorate, join gratefully & devoutly with me & say;

All glory be to thee, almighty & most gracious Lord God, that through thy infinite ~~mercy~~ goodneſs, ~~thou hast been pleased~~ in thy Son Jesus Christ, thou hast been pleased to offer salvation to all men, & to receive all contrite penitents, humble supplicants, & true believers to thy mercy. All glory to thee, that thou didst make known the bleſsed news of Christ's birth to the people of Israel, by the ministry of thy holy angels. All glory be to thee, that thou didst reveal the glad tidings of thy salvation, as on this day, to the Gentiles, & by the appearance of a star, didst point out to them the rising of the Sun of righteousneſs with healing in his wings. All glory be to thee, for that clear knowledge & divine light which have dispersed the darkneſs of ignorance & error, & bleſsed the world with thy salvation.

All glory be to thee, that through thy mercy the light of thy salvation hath, through the ministry of thy apostles & servants, enlightened the country from which we are deſcended; And that through thy providence, O bleſsed Lord God, we are permitted to partake in thy happy bleſsings of thy Gospel. For all these thy great & inestimable benefits, honour & praise be ever aſcribed unto thee, almighty & ever gracious God. And now, heavenly Father, be our strength we humbly beseech thee, & enable us, by thy grace & Holy Spirit, to walk as children of thy light. Be our wisdom we pray thee, & teach us, by our pure doctrine & holy lives, to spread the knowledge of salvation among those who still sit in darkneſs: That they with us, & we with thy whole Church, may be found of thee in peace, when thy Son, our Redeemer, ſhall, at his last Epiphany, come to judge the living & the dead. Hear us, heavenly Father, bleſs us & save us, we humbly beſeech thee, for his sake who is the reſurrection & the life, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

N. B. This ſermon was divided in the preaching, at the end of the ſecond paragraph in page 16.

Sermon the second.

Jesus in the temple.

The first Sunday after the Epiphany 1791

Luke II. 49.

How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Fathers buſineſs?

The word Epiphany, which ſignifies to ſhine forth with eminence, to be conspicuous in effecting any matter, was at first used to expreſs Christs nativity, when he appeared conspicuous in our nature; his baptism also in Jordan by St. John Baptist was expreſsed by it; when there was so glorious an Epiphany or manifestation of the adorable Trinity; the Father from heaven proclaiming, This is my beloved Son; the Son, in humble majesty, aſcending from the water of baptism, to receive, in his humanity, this attestation of the almighty Father; & the Holy Ghost, like a dove, deſcending, lighting, & remaining on him. His manifestation also to the Gentiles, represented by the wise-men of the East, was signified by the Epiphany.— These two last events, the baptism of Jesus, & his manifestation to the wise-men, are said to have happened on the sixth of January.

The word is also used by St. John to expreſs that glorious display of Christs divinity, which was made at the marriage of Cana of Galilee, by his turning water into wine; And, to name no more, by it St. Paul & St. John, in ſeveral paſsages of their writings, signify Christs ſecond Advent, when he shall come in power & great glory to judge the world at the last day (Coloſs. III. 4. Heb. IX. 28. 2 Tim. IV. 1. 1 Jo. II. 28. & III. 2)

At present the Church useth the word to signify fy the manifestation of Christ to the Gentile wise men from the East. At the same time the more general signification of the word is not forgot; but in the Epistles for the Sundays after the Epiphany, the Church preſses on us thoſe Christian tempers & duties, which more especially become us, to whom, by the mercy of God, the glad tidings of salvation through Christ come in the flesh are made known. And in the Gospels for those Sundays, thoſe transactions of Christ are set before us, by which his human nature is aſcertained, & in which his divine nature did eminently appear; that we might behold him in his true character, & have our faith fixed in him as God-man — in whom the divine & human natures were united for the redemption of the world.

With this view, the Church attends first to the human nature of Christ, & in the Gospel for the day, sets before us an occurrence in his life,

which [illegible]

which proves that, being born of the Virgin Mary by the power of the Holy Ghost, he did really & truly, of her body, take human nature on himself; was in all things made like unto other men, sin only excepted.

The Gospel informs us that it was the custom of the bleſsed Virgin & her husband to go annually to Jerusalem to celebrate the Paſsover, & that when Jesus was twelve years old, they took him with them on that occaſion.

The Jewish writers tell us, that it was the general practice of their nation, when their male children we twelve or fourteen years old, to carry them to Jerusalem & present them to the Priests in the temple. If they were found to be sufficiently instructed in the law, they were permitted to take the obligation of it on themselves, & were diſmiſsed with the Priests benediction.

Probably it was in compliance with that pious & useful custom, that the holy parents carried Jesus with them, at that time. Nor is it unlikely that his discrete answers at his examination, raised the attention of the priests & doctors to a desire, when they afterward saw him in the temple, of further conversation with him.

Having tarried ſeven days at Jerusalem, as the ordinance of the paſsover required, Joseph & Mary set out on their return home: And ſuppoſing their beloved Son had been in the company, they travelled on till evening. When, inquiring for him among their relations & more intimate acquaintance, he was not to be found.

To account for this circumstance, let it be noted, That when the time of attendance on the Paſsover at Jerusalem approached, the Jews of a neighbourhood assembled, on an appointed day, at a certain place, with their sacrifices & gifts; themselves in their best attire, & carrying green boughs in their hands. Thus prepared, the company set out, driving before them the bullocks & sheep for sacrifices, ornamented with ribbons & garlands. As they went along, they sung songs of praise to God, for the deliverance of their ancestors from the bondage of Egypt, & enumerated the great things he had done for them. When the solemnity of the passover was ended, they returned in like manner, praising God for the happy opportunity they had enjoyed of celebrating his passover, for the glory of his worship, & for the good land he had given them.

In such a company it would not be easy to find a person who had got out of observation.

on. It was natural for Joseph & Mary to suppose their Son was in the company, & that they should easily find him when they stopped for the night. This expectation would keep them easy through the day. But when their stopping gave them opportunity of an exact, though fruitleſs search, they returned with heavy hearts to Jerusalem, seeking for him. After three days abſence — one they had spent in journeying homeward, one in returning to Jerusalem, & on the next or third day, they were relieved from their anxiety by finding him in the temple, among the doctors of the law.

It was the custom, it seems, for the Jewish doctors to aſsemble, if not every day, yet at stated times, in one of the porches of the temple, to expound the law, for religious conversation, & for mutual advice. With them Jesus was found, hearing their expositions, & asking them questions.

Curiosity would have been ~~much~~ highly gratified, & much instruction, no doubt, imparted, had God seen fit to record the subject & substance of this conversation. Had the Evangelist followed the dictates of his own mind, here would have been a noble field for the display of his abilities as an historian. Like other historians, he would have dwelt with rapture on the child-hood of Jesus; he would have discribed the first dawn, & the gradual groth of that supereminency of ability & endowments, which marked his human character. Nor would his stature & person have been passed by unnoticed.

But St. Luke wrote by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost; & it seemed good to the wisdom of God to confine the narration to those things which more nearly concern the redemption & salvation of man.

That the law of God was the subject of this conversation we have good authority to suppose:

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& as Jesus had left the throne of his glory & veiled himself in mortal flesh through his love & goodness to the human race, we cannot hesitate to believe that the love & goodness of God made a great part of it.

It is remarked that *all who heard him were astonished at his understanding & answers.* The word translated *answers*, though it frequently ~~means~~ means the reply to a question, does not necessarily do so, but is often used to denote what was said when no question was asked. It is not here said that the doctors asked ~~Jesus~~ any questions. I should therefore rather translate the verse, *all who heard him were astonished at his understanding & speeches.*

It may not be amiss to remark, that in our Bible the expression sometimes occurs, *Jesus answered & said*, when no question was put to him. It would, on those occasions, ~~to~~ have been more conformable to our language, to have written, *Jesus spake & said.*

Kindling

Finding their Son in such company, & engaged in conversation superior to his years, Joseph & Mary were equally surprised with the learned doctors. Maternal affection, at length, broke forth in tender reproof, *Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us*? Why hast thou wounded the affections, & alarmed the fears of thy parents, by forsaking their company, & tarrying behind without their leave or knowledge? *Behold, my Father & I have sought thee sorrowing.*

The reply which Jesus made to this affectionate remonstrance, as it stands in the text, *How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Fathers business*? does not seem to me to agree so well with the occasion, as another translation which some learned commentators have given us, Why did ye seek me? did ye not consider that I ought to be in my Fathers house?

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Τί ὅτι ἐζητεῖτέ με; οὐκ ᾔδειτε ὅτι ἐν τοῖς τοῦ πατρός μου δεῖ εἶναί με (Hamond & Whitby)

Though his parents understood not the full purport of this answer at the time, yet Mary kept this, & other remarkable sayings of his in her mind, & treasured them up in her memory; truly judging, that such extraordinary replies from a child of his age, who had been conceived & born in so miraculous a manner, could not be without some very significant meaning, which time & after circumſtances would open to her underſtanding.

Thus early did the Redeemer give an instance of his attention to the *things that are of God*, & ſhew the beginning of that disposition which actuated his future life; & which he directly declared to be the grand motive to all his actions, when he ſaid, *My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, & finish his work* (Jo IV. 34)

Should there remain any doubt of the propriety of the conduct of Jesus, in tarrying at Jerusalem without the knowledge of his parents, let it be remembered that he came into the world to do the will of his Father — the almighty Father of heaven & earth, to whose authority, the authority of earthly parents must give place; that it was proper this distinction should take place gradually, ~~that~~ & not ~~that it should~~ come suddenly into observation & practice; that by his conduct an intimation was given to the holy Virgin, that the child she had, in so extraordinary a manner brought into the world, was destined by God to very extraordinary purposes; & that the reason & design of his actions must be examined on different principles from those which influence other people.

To all these purposes, her finding him among the doctors in the temple, & the reason he gave for his being there, that he ought to be in his Fathers house, or about his Fathers buſineſs, would strongly contribute. She knew he had been conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost; that he should be great, & should be called the Son of the Highest; that God should give unto him the throne of his Father David; that he should reign over the house of Jacob forever, & that of his kingdom there should be no end, had been announced to her by the angel who made known the gracious deſign of God toward her.

Great events from him would therefore be naturally expected by her; & this expectation shewed itself particularly in two instances; in her treaſuring up his remarkable sayings in her mind, & in her conduct at the marriage in Cana. The direct intimation she then received, that the honour of God was the great & ultimate end of all his actions, & that in consulting *that* he must not be directed or controled by others, was probably the reaſon of her interfering no more in his conduct.

With respect to the continuance of Jesus at Jerusalem without the leave of his parents, the wisdom of God hath so guarded it, that no evil consequence can arise from it. The authori he hath given to parents over their children is fully supported, notwithstanding this transaction: the Evangelist informing us, that Jesus went with his parents to Nazareth, & *was ſubject unto them* — obeyed their directions & commands with all filial duty & submiſsion.

The example of Jesus therefore teaches us to ſubmit ourſelves to parental authority. That children should be ſubject to their parents is the order of our nature as well as the command of God, & no situation of life can exempt them from it.

Could any thing have cancelled this obligation, the particular situation of Jesus would have pleaded more for him than can be pleaded for any other. His example of submission therefore ought to take off every plea, & to silence every objection that can be made against this duty.

And though our highest obedience be due to God our Creator, & it be our duty to consult his honour & glory in all our actions, & to make them the chief object of our lives, it does not appear that this supereminent obligation to God takes away the duty we owe to our earthly parents. Should they not perfectly coincide, on any particular occasion, obligation to God is first to be regarded, but obedience to parents still has its hold on us, & requires that we be subject unto them.

Then only do we perfectly follow the example of Jesus in this matter, when we make the things that are of God our principal concern, consult his honour in all we do, by obeying his will in all things: And, as an instance of obedience to his wil by honouring our father & mother, & ſubmitting ourselves unto them.

Sermon the third.

The humanity of Jesus.

The first Sunday after the Epiphany, 1791.

Luke II. 52.

And Jesus increased in wisdom & stature, & in favour with God & man.

It was observed in the preceeding sermon, that the Gospel for the day bears direct testimony to the humanity of Jesus the Saviour. As he was conceived by the Holy Ghost, so was he born of the Virgin Mary. Consequently the nature he received from her was really & truly the human nature, such as all men have, its sinful propensities excepted.

To the truth of this observation the text gives full support. *Jesus increased in wisdom & stature, & in favour with God & man.*

God, who is infinite in wisdom, & who is without

out body, can not increase in the one or the other. Jesus therefore, who grew up, from infancy through chilhood, to mans estate, as other men do; & whose mind improved in understanding & wisdom, as his year increased, must be really & truly man.

So strong is the proof arising from these circumstances, that some Socinians have endeavoured to draw from ~~it~~ them an argument against the divinity of Jesus, vainly pretending that what is said in the text, & in the 40th verse of the chapter, *An the child grew, & waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; & the grace of God was upon him*, to be, utterly incongruous to the divine nature; that therefore Jesus was mere man, as other men are.

Should this be granted it makes nothing to thei purpose. That these circumstances prove the humanity of Jesus is freely admitted. One end of the being written was undoubtedly to ascertain this point, necessary to be believed by all those who hope for salvation through him — of his humanity ty they are spoken, & of his humanity they are to be understood—

But it follows not from thence, that the divine nature was not in him united to the human, so as of the two to make one Christ, any more than it follows that because a man has a body, he has therefore no soul or spirit. As the reasonable, understanding soul, & human flesh or body make one man, so the divinity of God the Son united to the human nature of Adam make one Christ— not by turning the divine nature into humanity, but by uniting the humane nature to the divine.

As Jesus therefore was born of our nature, there is no absurdity in saying he increased in stature. Nor, since he had a human soul, is it any absurdity to say he increased in wisdom. It is the property of our nature for the body to increase in size, & the mind in understanding, as we grow up to maturity.

It is therefore a needless precaution which some have taken, who, to get rid of this socinian artifice, for it deserves not the name of an argument, say, that Jesus did not really increase in wisdom, but only appeared to others to do so. This only weakens the argument in favour of his humanity; and yet, to be our Redeemer it is as necessary he should be man, as it is he should be God.

Those expressions, as I have said, relate to his human nature only; & are intended to give us the fullest assurance that he was indeed very man, of the same nature with us, sin only excepted.

That the Logos or divine nature + the divinity of the Son _ was united to the human soul of Jesus at his conception, hinders not but that the Holy Ghost might manifest himself to his humanity,

manity, by such degrees as he saw fit, & inspire it with his gifts & illuminations; & this comes fully up to all that St. Luke hath asserted, to wit, that as the years & stature of Jesus increased, the perfections of his mind did proportionably shine forth, in divine wisdom & discretion; And that as these shewed him to be the favourite of heaven, & eminently actuated by the Spirit of God, so they procured him the favour & love of all who knew him.

That the humanity of Jesus is so fully & clearly ascertained in the Scriptures is an instance of the mercy of God to us, & of the care his goodness hath taken to lay a sure foundation for our faith & confidence in the Redeemer. Both reason & divine revelation declare the propriety of the atonement for sin being made by one in our own nature; that the same nature which sinned might bear the penalty of sin. It would not consist, either with reason or justice, that the burden of sin should lie upon a different nature from that which had offended. In that way it does not appear how any compensation could be made for the breach of the divine law which sin had caused, or that the authority of God, as moral governor of the world, would, in any degree have been supported. If man transgressed, what reparation would the sufferings of an angel make to the authority of God, while man who sinned went unchastised? It was therefore necessary that he who bare our sins should be of our nature, that so the same nature that sinned should bear the penalty of its transgression.

This argument St. Paul useth to prove that Jesus is the Redeemer of man — because he took on him the nature of man. Jesus, saith the apostle, *took not on him the nature of angels* — he laid not hold of angels that he might redeem them — *but he took on him* — he laid hold of — *the seed of Abraham*, being born of his stock according to his humanity, as God had promised. For the children which God had given him — the faithful, spiritual seed of faithful Abraham — being *partakers of flesh & blood*, *he also himself likewise took part of the same*, that is, was made man, of the same nature with them: *that through death* — by dying for them — *he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; &* might *deliver them who through ~~the~~ fear of death were all their life time subject to bondage*. *Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren; that he might be a merciful high-priest, in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people* (Heb. II. 13 &c)

The whole force of this argument lies in this, that as Jesus was, by his atonement, to save all the spiritual seed of Abraham, the children which God had given him, it was necessary that he should take their nature upon him, that by dying in it, he might make atonement for their sins, reconcile God to them, & deliver them from the power of death & the devil, by the resurrection to eternal life.

According to this doctrine of St. Paul, Jesus could not have been our high-priest; nor have reconciled God to us by making atonement for our sins, nor have delivered us from death & the devil, unless he had taken our nature upon him.

Forever blessed be the goodness of God that he hath given such convincing evidence that the Saviour he provided for us in our extremity is truly man; was made in all things like unto the children of men, only without sin; that he might be capable of offering his spotless life, even that human nature which had sinned in Adam, a holy & pure sacrifice of atonement for the sins of his people.

This evidence arises from four particulars.

1. From his birth; being born of the holy Virgin Mary, one of the daughters of Adam. From her of course, he must have taken the nature of Adam.

2. From his life; growing up, & increasing in size of body, & in the faculties & abilities of mind, as other men do.

3. From the necessity of his being man; that he might make atonement to God for the sins of men, by subjecting to death, as a sin-offering, that very nature which had offended.

4. From his death; As he was born & lived

as other men, so he died as other men die, by the seperation of the soul from the body.

The ground of our faith in the humanity of Jesus is therefore sure & certain. The adorable Son of God took on him the nature of man, thereby becoming Jesus the Saviour. In this human nature he suffered for sin by dying in our stead, that we who were dead in sin might again live through him.

This view of the matter opens to us the reason why none but the Son of God could be our Redeemer. No creature could unite humanity to his own nature. The nature & abilities of all creatures must be limited, & confined to that which God hath made them. They cannot add new powers to their nature, nor assume faculties which they did not receive from him who made them. They may debase & sink themselves lower by misbehaviour & disobedience; But they can add nothing to themselves by the most they can do. Besides, the most & best they can do is a debt they owe to their Creator, & which they will never be able to discharge.

Suppose now, as the socinians assert, Jesus was a mere man, — In what could he have saved us? in what have blessed us? Nothing of his own could he have given to us; nothing of his own could he have offered to God for us. As a creature he could have nothing but what he received, & of that he must give account to him that made him.

But being God & the Creator of man, he was able to unite his divine to our human nature, that by sacrificing it to God, he might make an expiation full of merit for sin; & by commu communicating his Holy Spirit to us, might renew ~~[illegible]~~ us in holineſs, & prepare us for the kingdom of Gods glory in heaven.

We see then the neceſsity of believing & aſserting the perfect humanity of Jesus — that our faith in him may be strong & lively; knowing that as he really assumed our nature, so he really redeemed it from the curse of sin & death by his own death on the croſs; that as he redeemed it, so he hath given his Holy Spirit to renew & sanctify it, & that, through sanctification, he will bring to eternal salvation all who believe on him.

The influence which the belief of this article of our religion ought to have on our practice are principally three.

1. It ought to call forth & enliven our thanks & praise to the Holy Trinity for the great & mysterious work of our redemption — To the almighty Father for his great goodneſs to us in our fallen state;

in having had such mercy on us as to give his Son to take our nature upon him, & through pain & suffering to redeem us from destruction — To the adorable Son of God for his love & goodness in condescending to divest himself of the glories of his God-head, & veil himself in mortal flesh, that he might make atonement for our sins, & reconcile God to us. — To the Holy Spirit of God for his grace & favour in vouchsafing to dwell with us, to purify our hearts from the defilements of sin, & to conduct our steps in the way to peace & happiness with God in heaven.

2. It ought to impress us with a deep sense of the obligation which lies upon us to obey God in all things. We cannot suppose that God, who loved us so as to give his Son for our redemption, will lay unnecessary burdens upon us, or require any thing from us but what is essential to our

happineſs with him. Our obedience ought therefore to be universal; extending to every thing which God hath commanded, & exciting us to do it — to every thing he hath forbidden, detering us from it. It ought also to be pure, proceeding from love & gratitude to him, the author of every thing we enjoy, or for which we hope.

The example of holy living which our Redeemer hath set us, is, in this respect, of the highest importance to us. It extends to every particular of our duty, & will direct us faithfully in every situation in which we can be placed. Look therefore to him, & endeavour to follow the steps of his most holy life. Then, as he died for our sins, & rose again for our justification, shall we die to sin, by mortifying all vicious affections, & refraining from all evil practices, & rise again to a new & holy life, & serving God faithfully in meekneſs, humility, &

patience, in devotion, & charity, & doing good to others.

To this end it becomes neceſsary, that, weak & frail as we are in body & mind, we resign ourselves up to the guidance & inspiration of the Spirit of God, whom, as members of Christs mystical body, we have received from him the head. All holy desires, good purposes, & virtuous wishes that rise in us, are from that Spirit. He gives strength to resist temptations to sin, & to obey those holy admonitions which constantly excite us to do that which is good, & restrain us from every thing that is evil.

3. The belief of this article of our religion, ought to excite our gratitude, & heighten our reverence to the holy catholic Church of Christ for the care of our spiritual interest which she hath shewn, in bringing this, & every other subject, in which our ~~spiritual interest~~ eternal salvation is concerned,

annually before us, in her public offices; makeing them thereby the matter of our meditations, & of our prayers & praises to the holy Trinity who hath done so great things for us.

Be it our care to regard her direction, & conform ourselves to her appointment; that serving God faithfully in unity with her, we may, by the guidance of his Spirit, obtain everlasting life, through his merit & mediation, who, being the Son of God, humbled himself to be made the Son of man, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Sermon the fourth

The Record of John.

The second Sunday after the Epiphany, 1794.
1794.

John I. 34.

And I saw, & bare record that this is the Son of God.

These are the words of the holy Baptist, who was sent to prepare the way for the manifestation of the Son of God in human flesh; & to bear witness to his person; that all might know, & believe in him who taketh away the sin of the world.

The first part of his commission he fulfiled by the preaching & baptism of repentance — that by turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, he might make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

To impress the necessity of repentance & reformation of life the more forcibly on them, he told them there was one among them, of their own nation, who should make his appearance after him; but who was so much his superior in dignity, that he was not worthy to do the offices of a servant for him; He, said the holy man, shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost. See therefore that your lives be reformed from vicious practices, & your hearts made pure from evil affections, that you may be worthy to receive so great a favour from him.

The other part of his commission, the bearing personal testimony to Jesus, & pointing him out as it were with the finger, we see fulfilled in the paragraph from which the text is taken.

From this circumstance, that it was part of the Baptists office to bear testimony to the person of Jesus, we have a right to expect his testimony to be clear & precise. Let us then attend to it.

That all suspicion of collusion might be obviated, John declares that he knew ~~him~~ Jesus not, had no knowledge of his person, & consequently no acquaintance with him. It was therefore highly improbable there should have been any previous agreement between him & Jesus about the parts they were respectively to act.

It may be proper here to remark, that particular care seems to have been taken by the wisdom & providence of God, to prevent all intercourse between Jesus & John, till their meeting at the river Jordan, when Jesus came to be baptised of John, & the scene happened of which we are treating.

Jesus was brought up in a private & obscure family at Nazareth, & till his thirtieth year, moſt probably wrought with his father at the carpenters trade. St. John Baptiſt was educated & grew up in the wilderneſs. In abstinence & mortification, in divine contemplation & retirement from the world, he fitted himself to preach that penitence & amendment of life, which were to prepare the Jews to receive their Saviour, Messiah. When every thing was ready according to the determination of God, he iſsued from his abode in the desert, clothed in rough attire, subsisting on coarse food, filled with the Holy Ghost & with zeal; & appeared in the wilderneſs of Judea, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remiſsion of sins. Hither Jesus came to him from Nazareth on the further ſide of the country towards Tyre, upon the borders of Galilee, & was baptised of him in Jordan.

From the account of the Evangelists, this was their first meeting. That it was so is highly probable from the distance of Nazareth from the wilderness in which John had resided till the time of his public ministry. The retired manner in which they both lived, & the little intercourse they kept with the world, greatly increase this probability.

There can therefore be no doubt of the veracity of John when he declared concerning Jesus, *I knew him not*, unless it should be thought that this asseveration to Jesus when he presented himself to his baptism, *I have need to be baptized of thee, & comest thou to me?* affords ground of suspicion that he did previously known him.

Attention to the circumstances of the transaction will, I think, remove every scruple of duplicity from the holy man, & convince the candid mind of his strict honesty in this matter.

It is said, that they who went to him from Jerusalem, & Judea, & all the region round about

Jordan, were baptised of him in Jordan, *confessing their sins*. His baptism was the baptism of *repentance*. It could not therefore be strange, that he should require confession of sins from those who came to his baptism, as a proof of the sincerity of their repentance, & of their steady purpose to live a new & holy life.

The blessed Jesus could neither confess nor repent; for *he knew no sin*. The appearance of so extraordinary a person, who made no professions of repentance & had no sins to confess, must have filled the Baptist with amazement. What need had such a person of the baptism of repentance? Should this circumstance have raised suspicions in John that this must be Messiah, the Son of God, to whom he was to bear testimony, there would have been nothing strange in it.

And can we think it strange that, conscious as he must have been of his own sins against God,

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God, ~~that~~ he should, in the mere simplicity of an honest heart, observe, that he himself had need to be baptised with the baptism of repentance, by a man so pure & holy, & could not think of administering baptism to him who needed it not.

If we allow due weight to these circumstances, it will, I apprehend, take off every appearance of ~~[illegible]~~ there having been any previous acquaintance between Jesus & John; & will give full credit to the declaration of the Baptist, that he *knew not Jesus*.

Having now established the credibility of the evidence of St. John in favour of Jesus, let us attend to the meaning & force of it.

He saith, *And I knew him not; but he that sent me to baptise with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending & remaining on him, the same is he which baptiseth with the Holy Ghost* (Jo. I. 33) *And*

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I saw, & bare record that this is the Son of God.

For when Jesus was baptised of John, he went up straightway out of the water: And lo, the heavens were opened unto him, & he, John, saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, & lighting upon him, Jesus. And lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

On this event John founds his testimony. This he saw & heard, & bare ~~record~~ that this is the Son of God.

Of him he had testified, Behold, the lamb of God, which taketh away, or beareth the sin of the world. So that the record of John consisted of three particulars.

1. That Jesus was the Son of God.
2. That he was the lamb of God, who makes atonement

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atonement for sin & takes it away.

3. That it was he who should baptise with the Holy Ghost.

1. To the first of these particulars, that Jesus was the Son of God, the Baptist bore record on authority of the voice from heaven, which proclaimed ~~proclaiming~~, This person, upon whom the Spirit descendeth in a bodily shape, & remaineth upon him, is my beloved Son. This voice John heard; this descent of the Spirit he saw; & therefore he hesitated not to declare that person to be the Son of God; for greater evidence, stronger testimony, more certain assurance he could not have. The opened heavens, the descending Spirit, the voice heard from above, were testimony too strong for any thing but the pride of infidelity to resist.

Instead of citing other texts of scripture to confirm your faith in this article of our holy religion, which is, in truth, the foundation stone on which it is built, I shall, at present, rest the point on this testimony of the holy Baptist, being persuaded that he who is not convinced by it, will be convinced by no evidence whatever.

2. The second thing to which the Baptist bore record was, that Jesus was the lamb of God who taketh away, or beareth, αἴρων, the sin of the world.

Isaiah had spoken of Christ as a lamb brought to the slaughter, innocent, meek, & unresisting. He had said of him, *He hath borne our griefs, & carried our sorrows* — *He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him, & by his stripes we are healed*. From the prophets, therefore, particularly from Isaiah, John had assured himself that Jesus was this lamb of God, to whom they all refered, & of whom Isaiah had so particularly spoken.

John knew himself to be the forerunner of Christ, Elias which was for to come, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight— This account he gave of himself to the Priests & Levites who were sent to enquire of him, who he was. And to the people who attended him, he declared, *I knew him not; but that he should be made manifest to Israel, am I come baptising with water.*

Knowing therefore, from the prophets, that King Messiah, the Son of God, whom he came to make manifestly known to Israel, was the lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world by making expiation for it, he openly proclaimed it to those who were with him, that in this character also, as

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a sin-offering to God for the transgressions of man, he might be made manifest to Israel.

As the Redeemer was promised to Adam & to Abraham, as the bruiser of the serpent, & the blessing of all nations; as his atonement for sin was not on account of the natural Israel only, but of all mankind, who by repentance forsake ſin, by faith rely on that atonement, & obediently ſerve God in newness of life, according to the Gospel, it is a point in which we are deeply concerned. The record of the holy Baptist, that *Jesus is the lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world,* ought therefore to be the most thankfully received, & cordially believed by us.

3. The third thing to which the Baptist bore testimony was, that Jesus is he who baptiseth with the Holy Ghost.

This record of John is grounded on the declaration vation of him who sent him to baptise with water; *Upon whome*, said he, *thou shalt see the Spirit deſcending & remaining on him, the ſame is he which baptiseth with the Holy Ghost.*

John baptised with water unto repentance; but the baptism of Jesus with the Holy Ghost reacheth further, even to the purifying of the soul from the defilements of sin. *Except any one be ~~bon~~ born of water & the Spirit*, said he to Nicodemus, *he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*

Washing with water is the general mode of purifying things which are defiled with filth, & of making them again fit for use. Hence water is taken to be the external emblem, of the internal purification of the soul, by the Spirit of God, from the defilements of ſin; That in holy baptism, a man may *purge himself from* these defilements

ments of sin, & be a vessel unto honour, sanctified by the Holy Spirit, & made meet for the masters use; prepared unto every good work.

The importance of these articles to us, make it a ~~important~~ weighty part of our duty to attend candidly to the testimony of the Baptist concerning them, & to regard as well his authority in support of them, as the meaning of what he hath said about them.

To lead us to contemplate the nature of Jesus the Redeemer, & to meditate on what he hath done for us, is the design of the festival of the Epiphany, as well as to celebrate the divine goodness for his manifestation to the Gentiles. Therefore hath the Church set before us the twofold nature of Christ, in the Gospels for the Sundays after the Epiphany; His human nature in the

Gospel for the last sunday, which takes notice of the increase of Jesus in wisdom & stature — & His divine nature this day, & in the Gospels for the subsequent Sundays; instanced in the astonishing miracles he wrought; particularly in his turning water into wine at the marriage of Cana, his divine nature, by which he manifested forth his glory, & his disciples believed on him.

Conscious as we all must be of innumerable transgressions of the divine law, it must be a matter of the highest consolation to us, to know that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners — that he is the propitiation for our sins, even Jesus Christ the just one; & that if any one do sin, he is our advocate with the Father, & that through faith in his blood all our past sins are blotted out.

Weak & frail as we are, as well as defiled with sin, the knowledge that the gift of the Holy Spirit of God is procured for us, & given to us by the all gracious Saviour, must fill every contrite, faithful heart with holy joy & exultation. By this Spirit we are cleansed & purified in baptism, supported under temptation, comforted in affliction, preserved in holiness, & sealed unto the day of redemption.

Let therefore the testimony of the holy Baptist, I saw, & bare record that Jesus is the Son of God, the lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world, the beloved of God, who baptiseth with they Holy Ghost, be the firm faith of your hearts, & then it will be the solid comfort of your lives; & in the end will bring you to everlasting life, through the same Jesus Christ, our Mediator & Advocate. Amen.

Sermon the fifth

The duty of fulfilling all righteousneſs.

The second Sunday after the Epiphany 1791
1794

Matt. III. 15.

And Jesus answering, said unto him, Suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us to fulfil all ighteousneſs. Then he suffered him.

When the bleſsed Jesus presented himself to St. John Baptist to be baptised of him, the holy man, finding he made no profeſsions of repentance, & had no sin to confeſs, was struck with awe & reverence for so exalted & pure a character. Conſcious of his own sins & transgreſsions, he humbly & modestly declined to perform the sacred office, defiled as he was, upon such innocence & purity; alledging, I have need to be baptised of thee,

&

& comest thou to me? Jesus answered & said unto him, *Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness* — Permit me now to be baptised of thee, for it becometh you & me, in a more especial manner, duly to fulfil the whole will of God.

This answer of Christ both shewed his own meek temper & ready disposition to submit to the will of God in all things, & effectually removed ever scruple of the humble-minded Baptist. He readily admitted him to baptism, & in doing so followed his example in fulfilling all righteousness.

And why should this conduct of the Baptist rest with him? Why should it not induce us to follow the example of his meek, humble, & obedient disposition, even as he followed the example of Christ?

That we may see the reasonableness & propriety of our doing so, we will examine into the meaning of the expression, *fulfilling all righteousness*,

&

& see to what particulars it more directly refers.

The word *righteousness* relates to some law, & means obedience to it — it is doing *right* according to *that* which the law requires. He who obeys the law by which he is to be governed, with regard to that law is a *righteous* man: He who transgresses it is guilty one.

As God is the Governor of the world, all the laws f morality & religion relate to him, & from him derive their obligation. The meaning of the phrase, *fulfilling all righteousness*, must therefore ~~mean~~ be, *obeying* all the commands of God. In an exhortation, or sermon which Moses made to the Israelites, he endeavours to convince them that the end of their law was obedience, & then saith, *And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments, before the Lord our God, as he hath commanded us* (Deut. VI. 25) St. Luke observes of Zacharias & Elizabeth, that *they were both righteous* before God, walking in all the commandments & ordinances of the Lord, blameless (Lu. I. 6)

Among the other blessings which we derive from the personal ministry of Christ on earth, we justly reckon the benefit of that perfect example of obedience ~~to~~ the will of God which he hath set us. He therefore submitted to the baptism of John, that he might fulfil all righteousness himself, & might set us an example, that we might follow his steps in all things where the will of God was concerned.

Personally the baptism of John concerned him not. It was the baptism of repentance; & his holy & immaculate nature being free from all sin, rendered him incapable of all repentance. Yet had he refused the baptism of John, he would not have fulfilled all righteousness: Because the baptism of John being from heaven, whoever refused to submit to it, refused to submit to the will of God declared in that positive institution.

I

all righteouſneſs.

I know that some divines, who ſeem to resolve all religion into moral duty, make a great difference between ~~obeying~~ diſobeying a moral & poſsitive precept, representing the former to be of very great, the latter of much leſs enormity. As far as the authority of God is concerned, I see not the difference. Disobedience to a poſitive precept is disobedience to God; of course a denial of his authority; at least a refusal to submit to it. All the laws of God, poſitive & moral, stand on the authority of God, & his authority is equally reſisted by tranſgreſsing a poſsitive as a moral command.

Men are apt to ſuppoſe that poſsitive precepts are merely arbitrary & have nothing to support them but the will of God: Whereas they see reason & propriety in moral commands, & therefore think it a leſs crime to tranſgreſs those than these.

But this takes all authority out of the hand of

God, & places it in the reason & propriety of things; & besides makes our own understanding the judge of that reason & propriety.

To suppose that God commands any thing from mere will, without regard to reason & propriety, is to think more disrespectfully of him, than a modest man will be willing to own. The highest reason must direct all that God does, because reason in him must be absolutely perfect, neither baffled by cident, nor warped by passion.

We think we discern the whole reason & propriety of moral duties & therefore set them the highest in our estimation. In this however we may be mistaken. Our understandings rather busy themselves on the surface of things, than enter deeply into their nature; and there may be much more reason for moral precepts than our boasted wisdom can discern. So with regard to positive duties, there may be great reason & much propriety in them, & they may also be highly conducive to our advantage; & yet our faculties may be inadequate to comprehend why they are reasonable, & why proper for us.

Something of this kind happens in natural things, & probably to as great a degree as in religious matters, & yet we bear our ignorance very contentedly. No man refuses to make use of his eyes or ears, because he cannot tell how objects through those senses affect the mind. No man refuseth to eat when he is hungry, because he cannot exactly tell how his food nourishes his body & strengthens his mind.

However we may determine on this point; It is certain that obedience to possitive precepts shews greater submission to God, than obedience to moral commands. The reason & propriety of moral commands strike every considerate mind; & probably obedience is oftener paid to them on that account,— because they appear reasonable to us, than on account of the authority of God who enjoined them. By this means the principle of obedience is divided — part of it arises from the sense we have of the reasonableneſs of the command, & the authority of God comes in only as a ſecondary motive. And,

Indeed thoſe people who value themselves on their morality, & neglect the poſsitive part of religion, generally act altogether on this ground. They think it right to regard the moral duties becauſe they are reasonable; because too they procure them a character for honesty & integrity, & promote the peace & good order of society. But God is not in their thoughts, & no regard to his authority comes into their minds.

This is called *virtue*; & as I have no wish to leſsen its influence or give it a bad name, let it enjoy that appellation. But if it be virtue, it is not obedience to God, since it regards not his authority as Governor of the world, but arises merely from what is apprehended to be reasonable in itself.

With poſsitive precepts the case is different. We see but in part the reason & propriety of them, & must trust to the divine wisdom & goodneſs that they are right in themselves & proper for us. Here the motive to obedience can arise from nothing but ~~obedience~~ duty to God, & a disposition to do as he directs. We believe he hath appointed poſsitive institutions for our benefit, & we comply with them in humble confidence, that as he knows what is right & best for us, better than we do, he will accept our obedience, bleſs us in the use of them, & make them effectual to the ends for which his wisdom & goodneſs appointed them.

It may be of use to us on this subject to recollect, that the test of obedience which God appointed for Adam in his state of innocency, was not a moral, but a possitive command. He could not know the reason of the prohibition – *Thou shalt not eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good & evil*, because he could not exactly know the penalty of his disobedience, *For in the day thou eatest of it, thou shalt surely die* – And to death in every shape, he was then a stranger.

Unhappily he wanted that confidence in God, wch leads to a total & absolute reliance upon his goodness & truth. Want of faith therefore in God, & of that principle of obedience which disposes the heart to trust solely in him, & to fulfil all righteous by doing every thing he requires, was the fault of Adam, & led him to ruin. If all righteousneſs.

If we look to the instance of Abraham we shall find, that all the trials of his faith, every test of his obedience was a poſsitive precept. And he is called the friend of God, & said to be perfect, that is upright, sincere, because he ever obeyed what God commanded, though it is impoſsible he could always have seen the reason & propriety of the precept.

Indeed I see not how a moral command can be made the test of submiſsion to the authority of God, since our obedience would be founded rather on the fitneſs & propriety of the command than on the authority of the lawgiver.

It is far from being my design to disparage moral duties, or to set poſsitive precepts above them. God, I know, requires mercy rather than sacrifice. And when poſsitive & moral precepts interfere, I readily acknowledge, the former must give way to the latter. But as this will but seldom happen, & as the highest proof of our obedience to God must arise from the regard we pay to his poſsitive institutions, I would recommend to your imitation, the example the holy Jesus hath set you, by submitting to the baptism of John. The reason he aſsigned for his conduct applies directly to us; & is a strong argument to all his followers, to endeavour, with honest & upright hearts, to fulfil all righteouſneſs, by cheerfully obeying all Gods commands of every kind.

There is one obſervation arising from this ſubject, & so cloſely connected with it, that I cannot excuse myſelf from attending to it. It is this;

That the ready diſposition to fulfil all righteouſneſs, which the blessed Jesus shewed by his submitting to the baptism of his forerunner, ought to convince us of the idle reasonings & pretences of those people who refuse baptism to infants because they are incapable of faith & repentance.

The baptism of John was the baptism of repentance, & the faith he required was, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus (Acts XIX. 4) Yet Christ was baptised with this baptism of John, though he could make no professions of repentance, because he had no sin of which to repent. Nor could he have that faith which John required; that is, he could not believe on him who should come after him, that is on Christ Jesus; for how he should in this sense believe on himself, exceeds all comprehension. Christ therefore was baptised without faith & repentance, & only that he might fulfil all righteousneſs, that is, obey every institution of God.

The innocence of infants is therefore no objection to their baptism, since they cannot be more innocent than their saviour ~~he~~ was. Nor ought their incapacity of having faith in Christ, be any objection to their baptism, untill it be explained how Christ could have faith in himself: For be it remembered that faith in Christ, either in baptism or at any other time, is only necessary to obtain remission of sins, & the other benefits which come to us through him.

When an institution is intended to answer several ends, & only one of them can, in particular cases, be obtained by it, it is still right, in those cases, to comply with the institution

One end of baptism is to obtain remission of sins; & therefore is repentance & faith in Christ the atonement for sin required in baptism.

Another end of baptism is obedience to God in fulfiling all righteousneſs, that is obeying all the commands of God.

A third end of baptism is that we may be taken or born into the Church of God, & thereby be put under the new covenant or dispensation of the grace & mercy of God through Jesus Christ the Saviour.

Of these ends of baptism neither the first nor the last could be answered by the baptism of Christ, for reasons already aſsigned. It remains then that he submitted to Johns baptism solely for the second end of baptism, namely, that by obedience to the institution of God he might fulfil all righteousneſs.

Suppose now the two first ends of baptism cannot be so fully answered in the baptism of infants as of adults; yet of the third end they are as capable as any adult can be. The new birth, the being born of water & of the Spirit, & thereby entering into the Church or kingdom of God, is no more the act of a grown person than of an infant: And if the infants of Christian parents cannot by baptism be taken into the Church, it must be because they are not so capable of being taken into the Christian Church, ~~that~~ as Jewish infants were of being taken into the covenant of Abraham; or that there is leſs virtue now in the water of regeneration sanctified by the Spirit of God, to enter an infant into covenant with God, than there formerly was in the rite of circumcision.

The covenant made with Abraham was the same with that under which the goodneſs of God hath placed us — not of unsinning obedience; but of righteouſneſs through faith; that is, of unfeigned obedience springing from faith in God, or the believing & doing what God declares & commands. And if infants were capable of being admitted into this covenant then, they are just as capable of being admitted into it now: For though the mode of admiſsion is changed, the eſsentials of the covenant continue the same.

Probably the inaccurate expreſsions which have long prevailed, especially among the sectaries in religion, & the aſcribing every bleſsing in it to the virtue & efficacy of our own faith, as though God could do nothing for us but just as our faith gave him leave & power, have been a prevalent cause of error in this matter. The common mode of exhorting people to _come_ to Christ, to _receive_ Christ, to _embrace_ Christ, to _cloſe with_ Christ, to _lean on_ Christ, with others of the ſame import; without ever explaining what they mean by thoſe expreſsions, or telling how Christ is to be found or embraced by us, may pervert the judgment & misguide the paſsions — it never can inform the understanding.

If religion consists in our taking Christ, I fear I do not understand it. The Goſpel, I apprehend, represents Christ as taking us, even as he took the little children in his arms. _Ye have not choſen me_, said Jesus to his disciples, _but I have choſen_

chosen you. Into his covenant God graciously takes us; if any one think we take God, let him shew how that can be done.

This opens to us the necessity of the sacraments of the Church, by which we are received & continued in covenant with God. These sacraments are not *of us*; they are of God; & if we refuse them, we reject his authority & covenant, & withdraw ourselves from him.

Some make baptism only a *visible act*, by which they who believe Christ to be Messiah, *receive* him for their king—*enroll* themselves subjects of his kingdom; In plain english—*write their own names in heaven*. If this in truth be so, no infants can be admitted to baptism, because they cannot believe Christ to be Messiah, they cannot receive him for their king, they cannot enrol themselves in his kingdom. But if by

religion,

by baptism God *takes us* out of this wicked world into his Church or kingdom, no reason can be given why he cannot take infants into his kingdom as well as adults.

Another error by which infants have been kept from baptism, is the denial of baptism to be the *washing of regeneration*; & representing regeneration as some after act, to be performed — I know not when, nor where, nor how — but to be performed in consequence of our own faith: For if regeneration be not effected & wrought in us by our own faith, but by the Spirit of God only; Why cannot the Spirit of God regenerate infants in baptism, as well as adults afterward?

It is not often that I draw your attention to controverted subjects. Sense of duty to God & his Church, to you & to your children, hath now brought me to do so. I pray God what hath been said may have its due effect on you, not only in keeping

ing you stedfast in the practice of presenting your children at the ſacred font of regeneration, but in leading you to consider your conduct in withdrawing yourselves from the other ſacrament — the Eucharistic offering of the Church; hoping you will, by Gods grace, correct whatever may be amiss in you. — To his protection I commend you, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

See on this ſubject Jones' Eſsay on the Church, p. 69. — where Mr. Lock's *Reaſonableneſs of Christianity* is quoted in the note.

Sermon the ſixth.

The Centurions ſervant.

The third Sunday after the Epiphany, 1792
1794

Matt. VIII. 10, 11, 12.

When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, & ſaid to them that followed, Verily, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel. And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east & west, & shall sit down with Abraham, & Isaac, & Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out, into outer darkneſs; there shall be weeping & gnashing of teeth.

The history of the cure of the Centurions servant of the palsy by the divine power of Jesus, hath been redde to you in the Gospel for the day. To this event the text relates. But as there is a difference in the circumstances of this transaction as recorded by St. Matthew & St. Luke, which ſome persons have thought considerable enough to weaken the authority of the Evangelists, that difference, in the first place, demands our attention. The difference is this

St. Matthew relates the history as though the centurion came personally to Jesus, & made his own application to him. Whereas St. Luke, whose account is more particular, says the centurion sent to Jeſus *the rulers of the Jews*; & that when Jesus was on the way to his house, he ſent other *friends to him*, to intreat him not to give himſelf the trouble of a personal attendance, but only to *speak the word*, *& his ſervant should be healed*.

St. Matthew relates the miracle in a manner that was familiar with his countrymen. With them it was a maxim, that a mans meſsenger is as himself.

self. With our Civilians to it is a maxim at this day, that what a man does by another, he does himself. Of this manner of speaking & acting the Bible gives us many instances. The recital of a few of them will shew that St. Matthew was not singular in his expression, but wrote according to the common custom of his country.

In Exodus XVIII. 6. Jethro is said to come & speak to Moses. And yet from Moses' going out afterward to meet him we find it was only by his messengers that Jethro had spoken to him.

Solomon sent messengers to Hiram king of Tyre (1 Kings V.7) And Hiram is said to rejoice greatly when he heard the words of Solomon.

James & John are said to come & speak to Jesus to do a certain thing for them; & yet from comparing St. Mark (X. 35) with St. Matthew, we find their petition was not made by themselves, but by their Mother.

St. John Baptist is said (Matt. XI.3) to speak to Jesus, while he was in prison & Jesus at a distance. By his meſsengers, the two desciples whom he ſent, he did speak to him, but not by himſelf.

Though St. Matthew relates what Jesus said to the Centurion, *Go thy way*, as if he was present, yet this form of ſpeech directed to a person abſent in fact, & only present by his meſsengers, is to be found in the Bible. When David sent Meſsengers to negotiate his marriage with Abigail, she directs her answer to *him* personally, because, according to the maxim of her country, he was present in his Meſsengers. *She bowed herſelf on her face to the earth*, & said, *Behold, let thine handmaid be a ſervant to wash the feet of the ſervants of my Lord.* (1 Sam. XXV. 41) St. Matthew therefore relates this history in perfect conformity to the custom of his country, & no impeachment of his veracity can be drawn from it — The Centurion was present in his meſsengers, the rulers of the Jews, & the friends whom he had sent to meet Jesus.

That this Centurion had a high opinion of Jesus, appears from the reverence he showed him. The ſense he had of his own unworthineſs is the reason aſsigned by St. Luke, why he did not in his own person apply to him. And both St. Matthew & Luke make the same sense of unworthineſs the reason, why he took pains to prevent Jesus from coming to his house, & not merely the fear of giving him trouble.

These are extraordinary instances of a meek & humble mind, especially in a military man who had the command of an hundred souldiers. The great authority with which such persons are invested, & the exact obedience to their orders which good discipline requires, generally give them a high opinion of their own merit & importance, & make every instance of courtesy & modesty in them appear with double lustre.

Nor does the Centurions humanity appear to have been leſs than the modeſt opinion he had of himſelf. Having a favourite ſervant ſick of the palsy, & being ſolicitous for his relief, he anxiously wished to procure that from the miraculous power of Jeſus, which the medical art was unable to afford him. He knew that the moſt ſtubborn diſeaſes diſappeared on the touch, or at the word of that divine perſon. He thought himſelf too unworthy perſonally to attend on him: His care was therefore to get the moſt conſiderable perſons to go & entreat that bleſsing for him, which his humility taught him he was not deſerving to ask.

The elders, or chief mageſtrates of the city where he resided, were the perſons on whoſe mediation he relied. To them & to their religion he had shewed particular marks of attention, & had built a synagogue, or houſe of prayer for them. He had therefore a right to expect this instance of regard from them, both on the ſcore of courtesy & of gratitude; &

most readily they appear to have interested themſelves in his behalf, & faithfully to have urged his request. Coming to Jesus they pleaded the worthineſs of the perſon for whom they made their application — *He loveth our nation*, said they, *& hath built us a ſynagogue* (Lu. VII. 5)

From this circumstance it is probable this Roman officer was a proſelyte of the Jews religion — what they called *a proſelyte of the gate*, becauſe they were not admitted into the temple to worship, but only within the outward gate which led into the court of the Gentiles, ſo called becauſe theſe proſelytes there worshipped.

They from among the Gentiles who fully embraced the Jews religion, were circumcised, they & all the males of their family. They were then baptized — all the family, male & female — & were then reputed & acknowledged to be Jews as fully as though they had been born of the family of Abraham, & were as much obliged to obſerve the whole law of Moſes.

But the proſelytes of the gate were not obliged to ſubmit to circumciſion, nor to obſerve the rites & ceremonies of the Moſaic law, but only to keep, what the Jews termed, the ſeven precepts of the ſons of Noah. These precepts were, 1. To abstain from all idolatry. 2. To worship the true God, the creator of heaven & earth. 3. To commit no murder. 4. To refrain from incest, & all lewd practices. 5. Not to be guilty of theft, rapine, or any violence. 6. To do justice to all men. 7. To eat no flesh with the blood in it; that is, as the Jews explained it, no flesh cut from a living animal.

Of these proſelytes there was a great number ſcattered through the Roman empire; & they ſeem, in a general way, to have been the first converts to Christianity, wherever the apostles preached.

They who are mentioned in the Acts under the stile of devout Greeks, were proſelytes of this description; & so was Cornelius the Centurion.

The knowledge of the true God, & the expectation of Meſsiah which they had imbibed from the ſcriptures of the Jews, together with that ſerious ſenſe of religious duty which first diſpoſed them to become proſelytes to the worship of the true God, opened the way to their converſion to Christ; & being free from the violent prejudices, & party attachments of the natural born Jews, the arguments in favour of Christianity made a deeper & more lasting impreſsion on them.

Upon the representation made to him by the elders, Jesus, who was ever ready to do good, said he would go & heal him, & immediately ſet out on the benevolent buſineſs. Probably some person was sent forward to inform the Centurion on that Jesus was coming.

But this was beside his wish, & beyond his expectation. He knew himself to be a ſinful man, a polluted heathen, & thought himself too unworthy to entertain a perſonage so holy & divine. He therefore sent some friends to meet him, & explain his request & views more particularly than the elders had done. They probably had delivered the Centurions request in their own way, however strongly they may have urged it. Poſsibly they expected to make a merit of bringing Jesus with them, ſuppoſing it would be more agreeable to the Centurion, or imagining that the presence of Jesus was neceſsary, & that his miraculous power could not operate at a distance.

His friends however did justice to his intention, & explained his request with due preciſion. They informed Jeſus, that the Centurion was grieved ed at the trouble he was taking to oblige him, wch trouble he had no intention to have given him: That the ſenſe of his own unworthineſs had prevented him from attending perſonally on him, when he firſt heard that he was returned to that part of the country: That he well knew the divine power he poſſeſſed, & that his requeſt was that he would *only ſpeak the word* — command the palſy to depart — *& his ſervant ſhould be healed.* *For*, said he, *I am a man also under authority, having ſoldiers under me; & I say to this man, Go, & he goeth; & to another, Come, & he cometh; & to my ſervant, Do this, & he doeth it.*

That is, If I, who am under authority, ſubject to the command of others, & obliged to obey the orders of my ſuperiors without heſitation, have yet so much authority over the ſoldiers I command, that they readily & punctually obey me, How much more canſt *thou*, who art ſubject to no control, who haſt all the powers of nature at thy command, ſay to the palsy, Go, & be instantly obeyed?

This declaration filled Jesus with ſurpriſe. He marvelled at the man, & turning to thoſe who followed, said, Verily, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. — 'Of a truth, 'I have not found an instance of ſuch firm, un'doubting faith as this humble, meek-hearted Gen'tile hath shewn, not even among the Israelites 'themſelves.'

His faith indeed was of that kind which never fails of ſucceſs: firm & undoubting it ever obtains its wish. Go thy way, replied Jesus, & as thou hast believed that thy servant should be restored to health by my word, ſo be it done unto thee; Be thy ſervant well according to thy deſire.

The word of Jesus is the energy of divine power; for he is that word of God by which all things were created, which called them into being when they were not, which upholds & governs them all by his will. — The ſervant was healed in the ſame hour.

Many things are to be learned from this history. We ſee in it the divinity of Jesus ſhining forth with lustre through the vail of his humanity.

I lately obſerved to you, that the design of the Church in the appointment of the Gospels for the sundays after the Epiphany, was to aſcertain to our understanding & faith, the two natures, the human & divine, conjoined in Jesus for the ſalvation of man.

That he was perfect *man, of a reaſonable ſoul & human fleſh ſubſisting,* was aſcertained in the Gospel for the first sunday after the Epiphany. The history of his attending his parents to Jeruſalem at the paſsover, when he was twelve years old, informs us that he grew up from infancy, through childhood, to mans estate, as other men do; and that the faculties & endowments of his mind increaſed & grew ſtronger as his body approached to maturity, as is the case with other men. Jesus therefore is very man, — of the same human nature with ourselves, ſin only excepted.

The Gospels for the last & present sundays prove that the divine resided in the human nature of Christ. None but *he* who created the water, & gave its juice to the grape, could convert the one into the other. None but he who is the Lord of life & death, of ſickneſs & health, who is superior to all the powers of nature, can, with a touch, or with a word, & at a distance, cure leproſies & palsies, diseases incurable by medical art. Let infidels sneer, & libertines scoff, still it is true, None but God can say to the leper, Be clean, to the palsied ſufferer, Be well, & be obeyed.

Trust therefore in this Saviour — Look to him for the cure of your ſpiritual maladies, with the same undoubting faith with which the Roman captain looked for the cure of his ſick ſervant, & you shall look with the same ſucceſs. For therefore did Jeſus cure the diſeases of the body & restore temporal health & life, that we might know that Jesus is God & able to heal the diseases of the soul, & to give everlasting health & life in his own heavenly kingdom.

Part the second.

The rejection of the Jewish, & the election of the Christian Church.

In discoursing to you in the morning, on the conduct of the Centurion who applied to Jesus for the cure of his ſervant, who was ſick of the palsy, I observed that there were things, of serious importance, to be learned from that history. The time would not then permit me to attend to them. Permit me now, as an introduction to the present discourse, to call your attention to two things in the character of that Roman ſoldier, highly worthy of your regard & imitation.

The first is the virtues of his mind which related to other people; his humanity, & benevolence, & humility & meekneſs.

His humanity appears in the anxious ſolicitude which he shewed for his sick servant, & the pains he took to procure relief for him in his diſtreſs. That his ſervant was neglected in nothing which could contribute to his ease or health, we have every reaſon to ſuppoſe. But he contented not himſelf with the common forms of attention to a favourite ſervant in ſickneſs. His humanity carried him further, even to the miraculous power of Jesus; & there he obtained that relief which none of the known powers of medicine could afford.

It is one property of benevolent diſpoſitions, that they are bleſsed both in the exercise & event of them. His humane heart must have received the highest pleaſure while he meditated & purſued the means of his ſervants recovery, & great beyond expreſsion must have been his joy at the happy iſsue of his application to Jesus. Imagination may figure, but neither the pen nor the tongue can deſcribe the exultation of his heart, upon hearing the strong testimony which Jesus gave in favour of his earnest faith in his power & goodneſs, & on beholding the health to which he saw his favourite servant restored.

His benevolence appears with particular lustre, adorned at once with piety & devotion. The synagogue he built for the Jews at Capernaum evinces the disinterested goodneſs of his heart. The best proof, the very eſsence indeed of benevolence is, that it ſeeks to do good abroad; that it aims in what it does at the happineſs of others, & hath little regard to its own profit. For though to do good to others, that good may thereby redound to us, may be a justifiable motive of acting, its merit is much leſsened when weighed in the ſcale of that charity whoſe praise it is, that she ſeeketh not her own profit.

Such was the scrupulous exactneſs of the Jewish law, that in the synagogue which he had built, he could not, being a Gentile, be permitted to worship, except in a part by himself, or with such proselytes as he himself was. A pure regard for the honor & worship of God in whom he believed, & a desire to promote the best, the spiritual good of others, must have been the only motive to his liberality in this instance.

His humility & meekness appeared, not only in the low esteem in which he held his own merit — thinking himself unworthy to request personally a favour of Jesus, or to entertain him in his house, but also in his being content to worship God as a polluted heathen, an unworthy alien, in a sequestered part of that synagogue which his own money had built.

The pride of the human heart, & a selfish regard to property, would have excited a degree of indignation in any mind not warmed with the love of God & man, at the thought of being excluded from the full enjoyment, nay from the highest seat of that edifice which its own money had erected. Am not I as good as a Jew! as well born, & as worthy to worship God as he is? Have I not built this house at my own costs & charges? Is it not then my property? & have I not a right to its full enjoyment? are questions which would present themselves to almost every person placed in the situation of the Centurion of whom we are treating.

None of these matters however disturbed his head, or polluted his heart. That he might acceptably worship the true God, even in an obscure corner, he was content to part with his money. Let who would fill the highest seat in the synagogue, it raised no resentment in him. The deep sense he had of his own unworthiness over-ruled all pride & vanity, & every other consideration but the single one that he might acceptably bow his knee & heart before his almighty creator.

It is needless to press these reflections on you. If the bare recital of them does not make you feel their force, all I could say would be said in vain. Let us then attend to another circumstance which shewed itself in the Centurions conduct, And that is,

His firm & undoubting faith in the goodness & power of Jesus. He relied on his goodness, the he would extend his mercy even to his servant. He confided in his power, that he could command the most inveterate diseases with the same authority that he commanded the ſoldiers who were under him: that he could say to the palsy, Go, & it should depart; to sound health, Come, & it should obey him.

The influence his example ought to have on us, in encouraging us to look to Jesus with the same confidence in his power & goodneſs, that he can, &, if we trust in him & obey him, will cure all our spiritual maladies, & heal the diseases which ſin hath brought on the soul, hath already been noticed. My present buſineſs is to attend to what Jesus said in consequence of the remarkable instance of faith which this Roman officer ſhewed. Verily, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east & west, & shall sit down with Abraham, & Isaac, & Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkneſs: There shall be weeping & gnashing of teeth. That is,

'Great & wonderful is this instance of faith in
'this stranger, far surpaſsing all that the Israelites
'themselves have ſhewn. But great as it is, I tell you,
'it ſhall not be ſingular. Many in the east & west, in
'all parts of the world, though not Israelites by birth,
'but strangers to the covenant & promises of God, shall,
'by their ready faith in God & obedience to his will,
'prove themſelves to be the true children, the ſpiritu-
'all ſeed of faithful Abraham; & shall come & be
'taken into the kingdom or Church of God; & with
'Abraham, & Isaac, & Jacob, shall enjoy all the
'bleſsings of divine mercy & love — all the good
'things which God hath promised to those who
'love & obey him, both in this world & in the
'next. But they who are now the children of
'Gods kingdom, ſhall, for their unbelief & impe-
'nitency, be rejected from being the peculiar peo-
'ple & Church of God; shall be turned out into
'that darkneſs which is without, & in which the

'Gentiles now abide; & shall be deprived of the light of divine 'truth, & of the illuminations of the Spirit of holiness, as the 'Gentiles now are. And most wretched & miserable will 'their condition be'.

This is the purport of the declaration of the holy Jesus in the text; & it is of the same serious importance to us now, that it was of to the Jews when it was spoken. How exactly it hath been fulfilled on them, history & our own observation inform us. By the destruction of their city, their government, & temple, & priesthood, & sacrifices, & worship — their whole Church is brought to an end. Refusing to receive Jesus for Messiah, & to be taken into his Church when he came unto them, they were cast out into outer darkness; & there ~~we~~ see them remaining to this very day; strangers & aliens, & without a country in this world; & strangers & aliens from the Church of God; & ~~from~~ all the blessings of Christ, Messiah, the Son of God, the Redeemer of man. God speed the happy time, when repentance & faith shall bring them in, with the fulness of the Gentiles, to the kingdom of God, the Kingdom of the Redeemer, the congregation of the faithful, that they may be all one fold, under one shepherd, Jesus Christ our Lord.

It deserves our attention, & I hope it will sink deep into your hearts, that Gods dealing with the Jewish Church, is a representation of his dealing with the Christian ~~Ch~~ Church, his rejection of the unbelieving, impenitent Jews, of his rejection of faithless, impenitent Christians, the final destruction of Jerusalem, of the final judgment & destruction of the world. Under this impression, let us consider the meaning of Jesus in the declaration of the text.

That the kingdom or Church of God is here represented under the emblem of a marriage feast or supper, appears from the Greek word (ἀνακλιθήσονται) translated to *sit down*, but which literally means to *sit down to meat* — *Many shall come from the east & west, & shall sit down to meat with Abraham, & Isaac, & Jacob, in the Kingdom of heaven.*

To this feast, representing the blessings & privileges of the Church of God, all are invited of every nation &

country, of every rank & condition of life, who imitate the faith & obedience of Abraham; that is, who believe the declarations, & obey the commands of God as he did. To them the truth of God is engaged, that, according to their spiritual meaning, they shall partake of all thoſe promises which were made to Abraham, repeated to Isaac, & confirmed to Jacob.

These bleſsings the believing Gentiles obtain as they are the spiritual ſons of righteous Abraham, & of course, heirs of the promises made to him. These promises God confirmed to his posterity by the prophets, who witneſsed in his name, that they should obtain remiſsion of ſins & eternal life through faith in Meſsiah who was to be born of the family of Abraham, & to be a bleſsing to all the nations of the world.

But to the Jews who believed not, but were disobedient to the will of God, his displeasure was declared; that on account of their wanting the faithful & obedient disposition of their father Abraham, they should loſe the benefit of the promiſes made to him & to his ſeed, be rejected from being the people of God, & left in that darkneſs

neſs, in which all must be who are out of the Church of God.

I said that the bleſsings & privileges of Christ's Church, were represented to us by allusion to the rich repast of a marriage ſupper. Marriages among the Jews were uſually solemnized in the evening, & were accompanied with an entertainment at the table. To this entertainment the guests, having escorted the bride & bridegroom to their house, sat down with them. The room being highly illuminated, the guests who were within, enjoyed the pleasure of the light, while they who were not invited were shut out & left in darkneſs.

For this reason the Scripture represents those who are excluded from the kingdom of God, the marriage feast of the Lamb, as being in outer darkneſs, or in darkneſs which is without. For,

As they who are without want the light which the guests enjoy, the protection of the house, & the refreshment of the entertainment, & are at once expoſed to darkneſs, & cold, & hunger; ſo they who are excluded from the happineſs of heaven, denoted by the marriage feast of the Lamb, are said to be, not only in darkneſs, but in anguish & torment, expreſsed by *weeping* & *wailing* & *gnashing of teeth*.

This, I trust, is a fair representation of the meaning of the declaration of Jesus in the text, *Many shall come from the east & west, & shall set down with Abraham, & Isaac, & Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkneſs: There shall be weeping & gnashing of teeth.*

How different from the imagination of the Jews! They supposed that every natural born deſcendant of Abraham, who bore the mark of the covenant made with him, would have a portion in the world to come. And though they admitted the proselytes who worshipped the true God, to the hope of future bleſsedneſs, of the heathen world, it is a common expreſsion of their writers, that they are fuel for hell-fire.

Happy for us, divine goodness hath otherwise determined; namely, that all, in every part of the world, who imitate the faith of Abraham, are his spiritual seed, the true Israelites; &, equally with him, are partakers of the blessings of Messiah — the privileges of Gods Church in this world, the presence of the Spirit of holiness, the grace of repentance, the remission of sins, a blessed resurrection at the last day, & eternal happiness with his Church triumphant in heaven.

We see, however, that unbelief & impenitency excluded the wicked Jews from all these blessings, & cast them into outer darkness. And let us remember, that the Church or kingdom of God in this world, & the Church or kingdom of God in the next world, are the same Church or kingdom; differing in their state & circumstances, not in their nature. The same impenitency & unbelief, therefore, which excluded the Jews from the Church or kingdom of God in this — world, will exclude all men, who continue in the same impenitency & unbelief, from the Church or kingdom of God in the world to come. This brings the matter home to us, & shews us that the declaration of the text most nearly concerns us.

Why, I beseech you, should the impenitency & unbelief of the Jews who once were the children of the kingdom, have cast them into outer darkness, & not the impenitency & unbelief of Christians, who now are the children of the kingdom, cast them also into the same miserable state of anguish & despair?

God is not the God of Christians only: He is the God of the Jews also — the God of all flesh; & his nature is unchanged, continuing ever the same. Impenitency & unbelief are as contrary to his nature now as ever they were, & as much so in Christians as in Jews. For the Jews Christ died as well as for Christians. Their wickedness brought the sentence of exclusion on them. The same, or similar wickedness will bring it on us also. Their sentence came on them in this world; and it came on them to warn us, that if we sin after their example of unbelief, we shall fail of entering into that rest which is reserved for the people of God

That the destruction of Jerusalem was typical of the destruction of the world at the day of judgment, will scarcely be doubted by any one who reads with attention the prophetic description our Saviour hath given of that dreadful event. The expreſsions are so strong that they fill the heart with awe, & comport with nothing but the general conflagration. And why are they so? Why was the destruction of a single city & the adjacent country expreſsed in terms which suit not with any human events? but to teach us, that as was done to Jerusalem in the day of Gods fierce visitation, so shall it be done to this world, & to all its inhabitants who sin after their example, in the day when the wrath of God shall be revealed against all unrighteousneſs & ungodlineſs of men. Then shall the wicked children of the kingdom be "cast out into outer darkness: There shall be weeping & "gnashing of teeth.

Consider these things; & God grant your considera-tion may lead you to true repentance for all your sins past, & to stedfast faith in the Redeemer, Jesus Christ. "Amen.

Piankatanck July 20th/94

Sermon the seventh.

The cure of the demoniacs, & the destruction of the swine.

The fourth Sunday after the Epiphany, 1791.

Matt. VIII. 24.

And behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus; & when they saw him, they besought him that he would depart out of their coasts.

The text relates to one of the most extraordinary miracles that is recorded of the holy Jesus, both in its circumstances & in its consequences. All his miracles were instances of benevolence, not only to those upon whom, or for whose sakes they were wrought, but to men in general. But this miracle has the appearance of cruelty & needless destruction of the property of a large

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neighbourhood.

The consequence too of this miracle was uncommon. Not only the wonder, but the veneration & esteem of the spectators were generally excited by the miracles of Jesus. They gave glory to God, that so extraordinary a prophet, able to heal sicknesses & diseases, was risen up among them; & they ascribed thanks & praise to Jesus for his goodness to them; He hath done all things well: He maketh both the deaf to hear, & the dumb to speak.

But this miracle excited neither veneration for his character, nor love for his person. The destruction of their swine filled them with fear of his power and dread of his vengeance, which even the cure of the demoniacs, with which it was connected, could not allay. A joint request from the alarmed inhabitants of the country, that he would depart out of their coasts & leave them to themselves, was its immediate consequence. Every

& the destruction of the swine.

Every thing which relates to the character of Jesus is to us of serious importance. It will therefore be worth our while to examine into the occasion & circumstances of the miracle, & see whether it can be fairly charged with that cruelty & needless destruction, which a first reading is apt to attribute to it, & which the patrons of infidelity have egarly endeavoured to fasten on it.

The history of the transaction hath been redde to you in the Gospel for the day. You will therefore readily recollect circumstances as they shall be mentioned, & perceive their connection with each other.

The ſcene of the miracle was in the country of the Gergasens. St. Mark & St. Luke call it the country of the Gadarens. Any appearance of inconsistency among the Evangelists on this occasion, will be removed by remarking, that Gadara was part of the country of the Gergasenes (Lightfoot according

cording to Whitby) the two cities; Gadara & Gergesa lay near each other, & the country between them might, with propriety, be denominated from either of them.

These cities lay on the East side of the lake of Galilee, or sea of Tiberias, & are represented as being inhabited, in the time of our Saviour, by a mixed people, Syrians & Phœnicians &c: To them resorted many vagabond, apostate Jews, who wished to keep out of the reach of the reproach & resentment of their countrymen; & therefore chose a habitation to which the power of the Sanhedrim of Jerusalem did not extend.

In this country Jesus was met by two men possessed with devils, exceeding fierce & dangerous. St. Mark & St Luke mention but one; but him they represent as being remarkable for his rage & violence; breaking all the chains & fetters that had been put on him. The other, being probably of a less violent temper, is omitted by them, tho' mentioned by St. Matthew.

Let me here remark; that these little variations among the Evangelists, is a ſure argument that they did not write their histories by agreement, nor copy from each other. Had they done so, there would have been an exact conformity in all circumstances; & that conformity would then have been urged against their credit, by those very people who now lay hold of every triffling variation to disparage them.

No greater variations however can be found among the Evangelists, than among other historians, who relate the same ſcenes & events without copying from one another. The Evangelists never contradict each other — this by some is made an argument of collusion; that they wrote by previous compact with one another. They vary the one from the rest in noneſsential circumstances — & this is made an argument of their inconsistency by others. In fact, the argument from hence is, that their histories are true, though some relate circumstances omitted by others. — Candour can reconcile their variations from each other, & their variations prove that every one of the Evangelists wrote independently of the rest.

It has I know been aſserted by modern infidels, who are apt to conceit that wisdom dwells with them, & that Christians have not their full ſhare of understanding & common ſense, that the accounts of demoniacs, or persons poſsed of evil spirits, which we meet with in the New Testament, are all mere fiction. And that the persons deſcribed as demoniacs were only afflicted with convulsions & epilepsies. Persons by such cavils may ſhew their enmity to Christ & his religion; but at the same time they ſhew their own ignorance, & want of discernment.

The Evangelists knew the distinction between poſseſsed, & epileptical people, between demoniacs & those who laboured under convulsions; &

have exactly made the destinction between diseased persons & demoniacs. They brought to Jesus, saith St. Matthew, *thoſe who were taken with divers diseases; & thoſe who were poſseſsed with devils; & thoſe who were lunatic, & those that had the palsy, & he healed them* (IV.24) again St. matthew saith, *He gave his twelve diſciples power over unclean ſpirits to cast them out, & to heal all manner of ſickneſs, & all manner of disease* (X.1)

The poſseſsed persons are represented as ſometimes speaking, & declaring Jesus to be the Christ, the Son of God. On some occaſions Jesus forbad them, & ſuffered them not to speak. Hear the testimony of St. Mark to this point, *And he healed many that were sick of divers diseases, & cast out many devils, & suffered not the devils to speak, because they knew him* — or, he ſuffered not the devils to say that they knew him — because he needed not their testimony (Mark I.34)

Hear also the testimony of St. Luke, who, as he was bred a physician, ought to have known something about the distinction & nature of diseases, & might possibly be able to tell the difference between convulsions & epilepsies, & demoniacal possession. Now when the sun was setting, all they that had any sick with divers diseases, brought them unto him; & he laid his hands on every one of them, & healed them. And devils also came out of many, crying out, & saying, Thou art Christ the Son of God. And he rebuking them, suffered them not to speak; for they knew that he was Christ — or he suffered them not to say that they knew him to be Christ. (Lu. IV. 40, 41) And in the case before us, the demoniacs pray him not to torment them, not to send them out of the country, not to send them into the deep, but to permit them to enter into the swine who were feeding near them.

Before a man can ascribe all this to a disease, to epilepsies & convulsions, he must have some dis-

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case, some slight convulsion at least in his own head.

Beſides, historians of those times mention demoniacs without heſitation, or any qualifying explanation, — Josephus among the Jews, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, & Origine among the Christians, Plutarch & Lucian among the heathen. These old authors were men of sense, & their writings are esteemed to this day.

The old Christians also appealed to their power & practice of casting out devils ~~by~~ in the name of Christ, even before the Roman Magestrates, & were not contradicted.

To argue against there being demoniacs in the time of Christ & his apostles, because we see none of them now in the world, or in Christian countries, is arguing on a slight foundation. There being none now, proves not that there never were any, though it is a good argument to prove that the power of the devil is restrained by him who once commanded an unclean ſpirit to come out of a man, & to enter no more into him (Mar. IX.25)

Let us now attend to the conduct of the two demoniacs when they came into the presence of Jesus. Though one of them was ſo fierce that he could neither be tamed nor bound, & his violence made it dangerous for any person to paſs near his haunt, yet he no ſooner came before Jesus than he fell down & did him obeisance; requesting that he would not send him out of the country, nor into the deep, nor inflict torments on him before the appointed time; but that he would permit him & his companions who were many — their name being legion, which ſignifieth a multitude — to go into a herd of swine, consisting of about two thousand, which was feeding in the neighbourhood. — So much did the divine nature & power of Jesus awe & control these apostate spirits! They

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They felt themselves ſubject to him, & they dreaded that almighty vengeance which they knew was sometime to come on them, & to be inflected by him.

The phrases, *What have we to do with thee? & Art thou come to torment us before the time?* relate both to the same event — their consignment to full punishment. For as the devils now *believe & tremble* at the power & justice of God, so they know they are reſerved in chains, that is, under certain restrictions impoſed on them by God, till the judgment of the great day. They therefore entreated that the time of their full punishment might not be hastened.

They entreated also that Jesus would not ſend them out of the country. Poſsibly they imagined that the country of Judea bounded Christs miſsion, & that the Jews only were the proper objects of it: Of course, that the country they were in, being inhabited by a licentious set of heathen Syrians & Phenicians, & of vagabond apostate Jews, was more subject to their power, & more properly the place of their residence, till the final retribution.

Especially they intreated that they might not be sent into the *deep*; an expression which is apt to convey to us an idea of the *sea*, or lake of Galilee, upon whose borders this transaction happened. But ἄβυσσȣ, translated the *deep* (Lu. VIII. 31) signifies the *bottomless pit*. The meaning of this request of the demoniacs is therefore the same with that of not being tormented before the time. Jesus had ordered them to come out of the men: They intreated that they might not be sent to the bottomless pit, the proper place of their final punishment, but might be permitted to enjoy the full extent of that indulgence, which the justice of God had allowed to them. Probably, as an assurance that the time of their full punishment should not

be

~~[illegible]~~ be hastened, they desired & obtained permission to go into the herd of swine which was feeding nigh them on the banks of the lake

St. Luke observes, that upon the departure of the devils, the ferocious demoniac became mild & placid, returned to his right mind, & suffered himself to be clothed. Either out of a grateful sense of the blessing he had received, possibly from an apprehension that in the absence of Jesus he might again fall under the power of the evil spirit, he besought him that he might be ever with him. But Jesus dismissed him with a direction to return home, & give glory to God, by publishing the great things he had done for him.

From this direction of Jesus let us learn to ascribe all the good we are inabled to do, to its proper author almighty God; to consider ourselves merely as his instruments in effecting it; carefully to avoid all appearances of vain-glory, & ostentation of our own power

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& goodneſs. This last conſideration was probably the reason, why Jesus permitted not this man to continue with him.

We see that the devils could not go into the swine, till Jesus gave them permiſsion to do so. Let this convince us that, however great their power may be, they cannot hurt us while we are under the divine protection: And let that consideration be an effectual inducement to us, to live constantly in the fear of God, & in obedience to his holy will; praying always for the defence of his power, & for the guidance of his Holy Spirit, that we may be ſecured, not only from the power of evil spirits over our bodies, but also from evil thoughts which may aſsault & hurt the soul.

And if we, who profeſs the faith of Christ, are freed from those poſseſsions & torments which evil spirits did inflict on men at the time of his coming into the world, let us thank him for his great goodness in delivering us from them, & proclaim to the world the mighty things he hath done for us.

This ought also to be an assurance to us, that we shall finally be delivered, ~~by the power of Jesus~~, from all evil whatever; from the evil of sin & of temptation, as well as from the evil of bodily possession; through him who was manifested to destroy the works of the devil; & who hath taught us to pray to our Father who is in heaven, that he would defend us from temptation, & deliver us from the *evil one*.

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From comparing the accounts which St. Matthew, St. Mark, & St. Luke have given us of the cure of the demoniacs whose case we have under consideration, it does not appear, that the entering of the devils into the swine, is any further to be imputed to Jesus than as he permitted them to do so; that is, he did not forbid or restrain them.

He had commanded the unclean spirits to come out of the men possessed by them: They besought him not to send them out of the country, which, from the temper of the inhabitants, they supposed to be a proper place for their residence. Particularly they intreated that he would not send them into the deep, the bottomless pit, the place prepared for the devil & his angels; at least not before the appointed time.

But as they must, in obedience to his all powerful command, go out of those men, they requested that they might be permitted to go into a herd of swine that was feeding near them. Jesus said unto them, Go; you have my permiſsion to do ſo. Upon this they took immediate poſseſsion of the swine; & the whole herd ran violently down a precipice into the lake, & perished.

They who kept them went immediately & informed the owners. The intelligence brought many of the inhabitants of the city & neighbouring villages to ſee & enquire what was done. They found the demoniacs quiet, in their perfect mind, clothed, & sitting at the feet of Jesus; but their swine were gone. Learning from those who had kept them, that the devils, when, at the command of Jesus, they went out of the men who had been poſseſsed by them, had, by his permiſsion, gone into to the swine, & that the herd had, in consequence of that permission, taken to the water & were drowned, they were greatly alarmed; & fearing to use more forceable means, they intreated that he would quit their country, & leave them to themselves.

The only inquiries that can arise on this subject, are,

1. Into the justice of the miracle which ended in the destruction of the swine of the Gadarenes.
2. Into the propriety of it; That is, Whether in itself it tended to produce such effects as would be of service to the people of the country.

Before I enter on these inquiries, I beg leave to remark, That as all the actions of the holy Jesus were marked with the strongest indications of benevolence, this has a right to the most candid interpretation. Unless we suffer prejudice to usurp the place of sober judgment, we cannot suppose, that he who went about doing good, should, in this one instance, needleſsly depart from that conduct, &, at the request of evil spirits, permit ruin to come on the property of these people.

This consideration hath made some commentators ſuppoſe, that this country was inhabited by apostate Jews & their posterity, who, in direct violation of the law of Moses, mixed with vagabond Gentiles by intermarriages, & indulged themselves in other practices which the law forbad. They suppose further; that being out of the jurisdiction of the Sanhedrim, & in a country where no exact government was in force, there was no way to bring them to a better & more orderly life: that therefore Jesus permitted this destruction of their swine in vindication of the holineſs of the law of Moses which was then in full force; & also to bring them to a due sense of their ſin, in abandoning the law & institutions of God, & living mixed with, & after the manner of the more debauched ed Gentiles.

The conjecture is a plausible one, but there is this objection against it; namely, that it does not appear that the country was inhabited by apostate Jews as is ſuppoſed; but by a mixed people of various nations, among whom probably some Jews of looſe principles were ſettled.

Suppoſing therefore the generality of the inhabitants of this country to have been heathen with a mixture of Jews; that they were not worse than their neighbours; & that they had a right to keep swine, & make such honest uſe of them as they pleased. Yet we are to remember, that God is the proprietor of all things, & gives & resumes the good things of this world as he sees proper, without being obliged to account to us for his proceedings.

When we suffer loſs in our worldly property, be the manner whatever it may, we never think, I hope, of accusing the justice & goodneſs of God for his dispensations to us. All our worldly property is his gift, and as he has a right to reſume his gifts when he pleases, so has he a right to do it in whatever manner he pleaseth.

We know that wisdom & goodneſs direct all his dispensations to us. We know that the governor and judge of the world will do right; not only in his final retribution, but in all the intermediate methods of his providence. This ought to be our faith. The perfections of God are a ſure ground for it: And it ought to make us ſubmit willingly to every thing that he permits to come upon us; being persuaded that we are then in the best state, when we, & every thing that concerns us is, as God pleaseth.

If disagreeable & diſtreſsful events happen to us, Why should we not receive them as our holy religion directs? not only without murmuring & fretting, but with hearts thankful to God for his paternal admonitions & corrections? For that the afflictive dispensations of God's providence are intended to produce some effect in us; either to call us back to a ſense of our duty, & of our dependence on him, when we have gone astray; or to exercise & strengthen our faith & patience, & perfect every good disposition in us, that we may become fit for his heavenly kingdom, ~~of God~~, no good Christian will doubt.

We know too that God does visit the inhabitants of the earth with judgments, in order to reclaim wicked nations & cities from their evil practices. Among others, he hath told us that famine is one of his ſore judgments. Every scarcity of provisions is a degree of famine; for famine is only extreme ſcarcity.

Should God, whose piercing eye nothing escapes,

capes, whose wisdom nothing can perplex, ſee it proper to visit a wicked country or city (& what country or city is not so) with judgments — Who is to dictate to him, whether he shall send pestilence, or war, or famine, or inundations, or fire, or ſtorms, or earthquakes? As he knows best when general judgments are neceſsary, he also knows best what judgments will most effectually answer his intended purpose. Again,

Suppoſe famine should be appointed the rod of Gods correction — Who has a right to preſcribe to him the means of bringing it on? Every thing that can affect the stock of provisions in a country, & cut it short, may be made the instrument of his will — drought, rain, mildew, frost, devouring insects, murrain, & other diſeases among the cattle — or any thing else which he chooſes may be made ſubservient to his pleasure, in bringing famine on a country, either to reclaim it from its iniquity, or make it an example of his vengeance. Once more;

Suppose the divine intention be to reclaim, & that he ſeeth that some destructive event, which would display the interposition of heaven in a more conspicuous manner, than famine brought on by what our blind philoſophy is disposed to call the operation of nature, is better calculated to rouse & alarm the stupid, hardened ſinner, than the gradual failure of the crops of the earth, or the ſlow destruction of the cattle by disease, Who can say that divine wisdom may not, with justice & goodneſs too, purſue that method?

Let us now apply this train of thought to the event before us —

Whatever kind of people the Gadarenes were, it is of no consequence to us. ~~Suppose them to be~~ That they were ſinners, no Jews —

[illegible]sone will doubt. Suppose they were Jews—Were they not under the obligation of the law of Moses, & forbidden to keep swine? Suppose they were not Jews but Gentiles, & to have as good a right to keep swine as we have; Were they not the creatures of God? did they not inhabit his earth? Were they not bound, in common with other people, by the laws of reason & conscience? If they were transgressors, Were they not subject to the judgments of God? or were they the only people whom it was unjust in God to bring to repentance by chastising them for their wickedneſs? If they might be justly corrected, What exemption had their swine from the visitation of God, more than the cattle of the Egyptians formerly? or more that those of other countries since, which it hath pleased God to cut off by murrain, & in other

ther ways? Again;

If their swine were not privileged against the visitation of God, Who can give a reason why they should not be destroyed in the way which happened, as well as in any other way?

By the ministry of an angel, God cut off seventy thousand ~~Israelites~~ in the time of David, by pestilence. No sober Christian will charge God with injustice in that visitation. And is a herd of swine, the property of the Gadarenes, of such estimation, that God must be cruel & unjust, because he permitted a legion of evil spirits to wreak their malice on them?

Either then there was no injustice or cruelty in chastising the wickedness of the Gadarens by the destruction of their swine; or we must say there is injustice & cruelty in every afflictive dispensation of Gods providence which comes on us, however wise & gracious the divine intention may have been in permitting king it. If this be absurd, so is the other.

The ways of God are far above our comprehenſion. That justice & equity, goodneſs & mercy direct all his dealings with the children of men, appears evidently from what we know of his nature, & ought to be the full aſsurance of our hearts. Then should we live in happy confidence, that all the diſpensations of his providence are directed by his goodneſs & love, & intended for our benefit; and that whether he comfort or afflict us in this world, he will finally make his justice & mercy clear as the noon day, & reward all his faithful ſervants with glory & bleſsedneſs unspeakable & eternal.

Part the third.

The justice & goodneſs of God, in permitting the destruction of the swine of the Gadarens, by the evil spirits who were, by the power of Jesus cast out of the demoniacs, was, I trust, fully vindicated in the sermon in the forenoon; & shewn to be free from the imputation of that cruelty which scoffers at divine revelation have affected to cast on it. Let us next ſee what can be said in favour of the propriety of that miracle.

There are three reaſons which more particularly point out the propriety of it, & shew that it was dictated by goodneſs, & had for its object the benefit of those people who suffered loſs of their property by it.

1. The miracle gave the Gadarens an evident

proof of the malice & virulence of evil spirits when unrestrained by the power of God. It natural tendency therefore was, to make them more sensible of the goodness & mercy of Jesus to those demoniacs whom his power had delivered from their possession.

No sooner had those evil spirits the permission of Jesus to go into the swine, than they availed themselves of it. And no sooner had they entered into them, than the destruction of the whole herd ensued. Destruction is their pleasure; and we have no reason to suppose but that, if their malice & fury were unrestrained by the power of God, the destruction of the whole human race would be certain & immediate.

The scriptures represent them as the great & irreconcilable enemies of man, going about as a roaring

ing lion ſeeking whom to devour. By the destruction of the swine of the Gadarens, God hath given to us, as he gave to them, a demonstrative proof of their rage & malice; a proof which ought to convince us that their malice & rage against us would know no bounds, was he not to be our defence. Our defence he will be as long as we continue to deserve it; how much longer depends on his mercy & goodneſs. When he sees that they can do us no good, his justice & judgments will be employed to bring us to repentance.

The inference from hence is, that we attend to the admonitions of God, & avoiding all sin, obey his laws & follow his directions. Then shall we live in his protection, & be safe from all evil that can hurt us, under the cover of his almighty defence.

Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning. Aforetime it hath been written,

written of Baalam that when he found he could not prevail on God to curſe the Israelites, he counſelled Balak to lead them into sin against God, that his protection might depart from them. This wicked counsel was carried into effect by the fair daughters of Moab, who tempted the people into idolatry. And the anger of the Lord broke out in a plague upon the offenders in Israel, & there died twenty & four thousand.

For our learning was this written, as St. Paul testifieth: And its proper effect should be to deter us from departing from the Lord our God, by renouncing or corrupting our holy religion, or by polluting ourselves with the lusts of the flesh (1 Cor. X. 8)

Of the devil Jesus said, *He was a murderer from the beginning, & abode not in the truth — he is a liar, & the father of it* (Jo. VIII. 44) This also hath been written for our learning: And from it we ought to take a lesson of instruction, to wit, that murders, the destruction of the human species, lying & falsehood are from him, & properly his work — that he delights in falsehood & destruction; & is never better pleased than when he can bring men to imitate him, & deceive & slaughter one another.

St. James ascribes it to the lusts of men, that wars & fightings happen among them (Ja. IV.1) The lust of power & dominion, inflamed by the spirits of darkness, excite men to deceive, & betray, & destroy each other, that they may accomplish their own schemes of human vanity & glory. To this cause have most of the wars which have happened in the world been owing; & the destruction of the human race which they have occasioned, have far exceeded all other causes of destruction put together.

It is the consolation of the Christian — the follower of Jesus, whose kingdom is the kingdom of peace & love — that all things are in the hand of God; that he who said to the proud waves of the sea, Hitherto shall ye come & no further, can also control the baneful effects of the lusts of men; that as war is one of his judgments upon wicked countries, when it has answered his purpose, he can, & will speak peace & all shall be quiet; that evil spirits whose delight is to excite war & bloodshed, are by him reserved in chains unto the judgment of the great day, & can act no further than he shall permit.

The design of almighty God, therefore, in permitting the malice of evil spirits to accomplish the destruction of the swine of the Gergasens, & to excite the passions of men to war & mutual destruction, is one & the same — to convince men of his power, to punish them by his judgments & thereby reclaim them, & to make his mercy, & truth, & salvation known unto the world, especially to the righteous ones who trust in him.

2. The second reason which supports the propriety of this miracle is, that it had a direct tendency to convince the Gergasens of the great mercy which God manifested to them by the coming of Christ, if they would accept it, & return to him by repentance & amendment of life.

Of the power of evil spirits they could not be ignorant. They had seen the rage & torture of the two demoniacs who had alarmed their neighbourhood. So much had they dreaded the fury & violence of one of them that they had ineffectually endeavoured to bind him; but their chains & fetters had been broken to pieces by his amazing strength. These men they saw mild & meek, divested of all propensity to do mischief, & harbouring no malevolence to any one. Through the power & mercy of Jesus, they had exchanged the ferocity of devils for the mildness of the Lamb.

From those who had kept their swine, they had learned how this had happened; that Jesus had commanded the devils to come out of the men, & had been obeyed; that he had permitted them to go into the swine, & their destruction had followed.

Of the power of Jesus over evil spirits they therefore had palpable evidence. His divine power in the cure of the demoniacs was conspicuous; & so was the malice of the devils in the destruction of their swine.

In all reason, they ought to have rejoiced in the restoration of those poor distressed men to the use of their reason, & the command of their own actions. To have rejoiced also in the presence of Jesus, as of a divine person armed with the power of God, able to shield them from all dangers both of body & soul, & to confer all blessings on them, was their real duty.

Having seen the goodness & power of Jesus in the relief of thoſe men who had been poſseſsed, it is natural to suppose they would have requested his abode with them, at least till they could more fully have seen the tendency & effect of his general conduct; That, like the man from whom the evil spirits had been expelled, they would have desired to have been perpetually present with him, that they might have been secure from those demons whose malice they had seen in the destruction of their ſwine.

But their whole reflection seems to have been upon their loſs. Though they saw two of their fellow men relieved from the most diſtreſsed state into which human nature can fall, they neither rejoiced, nor regarded it. Like the devils they saw the power of Jesus, & like them too, they trembled at it. They had lost their ſwine: Jesus had permitted the devils ejected from the men to enter into them, & they were drowned. The further from him therefore, they thought the better; & chose rather to have a legion of devils in their neighbourhood, than him who could expel them thence, if they must pay so dearly for it. — *They besought him that he would depart out of their coasts.*

3. This brings me to the third reaſon in ſupport of the propriety of this miracle, which is that it had a direct tendency to open the eyes & understandings of the Gergasens, by shewing them to themselves; that they might ſee & know how low & groveling their minds were, in their attachment to this world, & neglect of all thoughts of a better. The history of the miracle has also a direct tendency to convince all who read it of the selfiſhneſs & stupidity of those people, in prefering their swine to the happineſs

of their fellow creatures, & even of their own ſouls—the profit & pleaſure ariſing from them,—to the bleſsing & protection of God in this world, & to happineſs with him in the world to come.

Should it be ſaid that theſe bleſsings were not made known to them, I anſwer,

The power of Jesus over evil spirits, & his goodneſs to men were made known to them; & in a way which ought to have excited the attention & regard of every obſerver. They saw the men whoſe miſchievous & violent diſpoſitions they had long dreaded, reclining placid & tranquil at the feet of Jesus, no longer the ſlaves of diabolical fury, but masters of their own actions, & under the conduct of ſound reaſon. How this happened they had been told, & ſo told as to believe the report, for in conſequence of the loſs of their ſwine in which the history ended, they besought Jesus that he would depart out of their coasts.

That further blessings through Jesus were not made known to them, was therefore their own fault; they precluded themselves from the opportunity; they thrust Jesus from them, & would have none of his instructions. And let me observe that this is ever the effect of the love of the world — It is enmity against God; Its language is, Depart out of our coasts.

Nor does it matter on what particular this love of the world fixes, — our farms, our merchandise, our money at interest, our swine — let them, let any temporal thing but engage the heart, & God is neglected, the things of eternity are disregarded. Every thing must give place to that on which the heart fixes its affections, & the desires doat; be it what it may. And as much, & as sorely should we be hurt by the loss of it, even though that loss brought salvation to our doors, & happiness to the world, as the Gergasens were hurt by the loss of their swine.

Should it be asked, Why Jesus made this trial of the conduct of those people, when he must have known that it would end in the manifestation of their stupidity, & consequently in the aggravation of their guilt? I answer, that God treats men as reasonable creatures, & as having a will of their own; & lays before them such motives as ought to influence both their reason & their will to act properly. To these motives, the admonitions & suggestions of his Spirit are added. If in opposition to all this they do act perversely, the fault is their own; And it does not appear how omnipotency itself can prevent it, without over-ruling their will; that is, without destroying their nature. Besides;

The miracle wrought on the demoniacs was not intended for their sole benefit, but, by them, to make the mercy of God in the power of Jesus known to the world, that men might believe & trust in him for protection against evil spirits, & for all other bleſsings for ſoul or body. Nor was what befel the Gergasens intended to inform Jesus of their temper, nor how they would act under such a display of divine power & goodneſs, nor merely to do them good in any way; but to set them up as a beacon to the world, that all men might see their ſelfish, base, & stupid conduct, & ſeeing, might detest & avoid it.

To this use it may now serve us; & for this purpoſe the Church hath ſelected it for the Gospel of one of the ſundays after the Epiphany. Uſe it then to the purpoſe for which the Church hath ſet it before you; & let that display of the power of Jesus over the ſpirits of darkneſs which it exhibits, that energy of goodneſs which he shewed to those whom satan oppreſsed, confirm your faith in him as your

Seatuket 1821

Sermon the eighth.

The tares of th field.

The fifth Sunday after the Epiphany 1794.

Matt. XIII. 30.

Let both grow together untill the harvest; And in the time of harvest, I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, & bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn.

The chapter of the text begins with the parable of the sower, & relates principally to the first planting or preaching of the Christian religion in the world; & to the different success it met with, according to the different dispositions of heart in the hearers. Some of this heavenly seed, the word of God, was lost through the carelessness &

inattention of the hearers, represented by the highway, into which the ſeed of the husbandman cannot enter, but lies expoſed to the feet of paſsengers, & to be devoured by birds. Some was lost through unbelief & hardneſs of heart, which hindered the word of God from taking such root as would have enabled them to endure the fiery trial of temptation & persecution. These are represented by ſeed sown among rocks, & stones, & gravel, without depth of earth or moisture to support the blade under drought & the scorching heat of the sun. Other seed was lost by being choked & stifled by the cares, & riches, & pleaſures of the world; just as wheat sown among briars & thorns will be choked & stifled by their over growth. The only ſucceſsful sowing of this good seed, the word or Gospel of God, was when it met with an honest & good heart, which heard it with patience, & kept it with faith & a good conſcience. Then like good wheat sown in good ground, it sprung up, & grew, & brought forth fruit, some an hundred fold, some sixty, & some thirty.

To the parable of the sower that of the tares ſeems to have been added by Christ to ſhew that even the good ground, the honest & good heart, is in this world liable to disasterous circumstances. That though it be not trodden down ~~by~~ like the highway, nor dried up through want of moisture like gravelly soil, nor choked by the cares & riches of the world, as wheat is choked by briars & thorns; yet, by the permiſsion of God, tares will grow in it as well as wheat: And that though the tares may, in some respects, be detrimental & inconvenient to the wheat, yet they are so mixed with it, that it surpaſseth human prudence to separate them without great risk of damage to the good grain. They must grow together till the harvest, Then care & industry will seperate them without harm to the crop.

It will not, I trust, be tedious to you to hear the parable, & our Saviours interpretation of it. It will enable you to comprehend better any reflections that may be made on it. The kingdom of heaven is likened to a man who sowed good seed in his field: But while men slept, his enemy came & sowed tares among the wheat, & went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, & brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came & said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go & gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, yee root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together untill the harvest: And in the time of harvest I will say unto the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, & bind them in bundes to burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn. This is the parable; hear also the interpretation of it from Christ himself.

He that soweth the good seed, is the Son of man: The field is the world: The good seed are the children of the kingdom: But the tares are the children of the wicked one: The enemy that soweth them, is the devil: The harvest is the end of the world: And the reapers are the angels. As the tares are gathered & burnt in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, & they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, & them which do iniquity; & shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing & gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father.

The first observation I have to make relates to the meaning of the expression, The kingdom of heaven. The phrase is frequently used by Christ in his parables & discourses — The kingdom of heaven is like unto a grain of mustard seed: The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven which a woman took & hid in three measures of meal. The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net that was cast into the sea (Matt. XIII) The kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a householder (Matt. XX. 1) The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king which made a marriage for his son (Matt XXII. 2) The kingdom of heaven is likened unto ten virgins (Matt. XXV. 1) In all these places, & probably wherever it is used by the blessed Jesus, it means not the kingdom of Gods glory in heaven; but the Church of Christ, the state, or dispensation of the Gospel in this world.

That it has that particular meaning in the parable of which we are treating, appears evidently from Christs explanation, The Son of man shall send forth his angels, & they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, & them which do iniquity — shall seperate the tares from the wheat. Now in the kingdom of glory in heaven, there is, there can be nothing that doth offend; none who do iniquity;

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& therefore nothing can be taken away.

2. A second observation is, that it appears from the parable, that the wisdom of God permits good & bad men to continue & live together in his Church in this world; that therefore it is idle to expect the Church to be so pure that there shall be no wicked or hypocritical members in it. The Church is represented to us by a field in which tares grow with the wheat, & cannot be seperated till the day of judgment, & even then not by man, but by the angels of the judge — by a net cast into the sea, which encloseth both good & bad fishes; nor can they be seperated the one from the other, till the net be drawn to the shore, that is, till the end of the world; & this seperation too, of the wicked from among the just will be made by the angels of the judge.

It may be said, that wicked people are only external members of Christs Church, not in reality children of the kingdom, & vital members of that body of which Christ is the head. Allow this to be so, it makes nothing to the purpose for which it is alledged. While such persons conceal their wickedneſs, they can be known only to God who ſeeth the heart & knoweth the covered actions of men. By us they must be treated according to their appearance, for we can neither ſee nor judge further.

Nor must their mistakes, or infirmities, or real faults be examined with too strict an eye, but borne with in patience & mildneſs, & in hopes of their amendment, for which every effort should be made; remembering that the discipline of the Church is for edification not for destruction.

The evil dispositions & practices of wicked men, are certainly not the produce of the good seed sown by the Son of man, who hath spread the heavenly doctrines of truth & purity through the world.

They are the tares among the wheat, sown or produced by the enemy of God & goodneſs, the *evil one*. Tho proceeding from one & the same root, the evil seed which satan hath sown, their fruit is various, but all evil, schisms, heresies, corrupt doctrines, hypocrisies, deceit, hatred, malice, evil tempers, paſsions, & practices of all kinds.

Whereas the fruit of the good ſeed of eternal life sown by the Son of man, is unity, charity, peace, purity, piety, & holineſs of every kind, represented to us by the pure wheat, the good ſeed which the master sowed in his field.

They who live in this state, & bring forth these fruits of christian virtue, are the wheat of the field, the children of the kingdom, the real members of the mystical body of Christ. They who live in the former state, & bring forth those evil fruits, & vicious practices, are the tares of the field, the children of the evil one.

Different as the principles & conduct of these people are, & different as the consequences of them will be, the wisdom of God permits them to live together here, in his Church. Wisdom we know directs all his dispensations, & justice & mercy are the rule of his condu Our limited capacities cannot reach the height of his wisdom, nor fathom the depth of his justice, nor comprehend the bounds of his mercy.

In the present case however we can see enough to convince us, that it is for the sake of the righteous that God permits the wicked to live with them in his kingdom. By the evil deeds of wicked men the patience of the good is exercised & strengthened; by schisms & divisions, the necessity & blessedness of christian unity is shewn; by ~~schisms & divisions~~ corrupt doctrines, the soundness of their faith is proved; by pride, their humility; by hypocrisy, their sincerity; by hatred, their charity; by persecution, their trust & dependence on God are kept in action & made perfect.

Besides; the affairs of good & bad men are so intimately ly mixed together, & their worldly interests interwoven, like the roots of the wheat & tares growing in the same field, that there is no pulling up the one, without rooting up the other with it. So that should God, by his judgments, take the wicked away, the good must suffer greatly in their worldly connections & interests, as well as in their virtues.

The ardor therefore of religious people which sometimes excites them to wish that bad men were utterly rooted out from the Church of God, so that it might be pure, without any mixture of evil, is wrong in its foundation. It aims at a point which it is impossible to accomplish without the destruction of the good; & which, could it be accomplished, is contrary to the wisdom & will of God. And,

Was it practicable, What wisdom of man is equal to the task? We know not the hearts of men, nor always the principles & motives on which the act: We cannot therefore judge of the rectitude of their actions.

We may be mistaken ourselves, & through prejudice judge principles & practices to be wrong, which true judgment would determine to be right: Or we may be ignorant of circumstances on which the rectitude & propriety of actions depend. On these accounts we must be utterly unfit to root these tares out of the Church of God, was it practicable to do so without injuring the wheat.

All that fiery Zeal, therefore, which vents itself in persecution for religion's sake, in order to make them think & act just as we please; or that burns to destroy all who oppose our principles, & transgreſs our rules, as enemies to God, & unworthy to continue in his Church, is to be condemned: It is contrary to the nature & spirit of our religion; It is contrary also to the design of God in permitting evil men to ſubſist in his Church, for the benefit of the good, the trial of the faithful, & the perfecting of his saints.

(Whenever this seperation is made, it must be made by God himself; by him who now permits the righteous & the wicked to live together; for he only, to whom all hearts are open, & all thoughts are known, is able with justice to determine the characters of men. And he hath told us that this seperation shall be made at the end of the world, when both the righteous & the wicked have fulfilled the designs of his providence & grace in this life; when the net of the kingdom of heaven shall be drawn to the shore, & the harvest of his husbandry shall be ripe for the sickle. Then shall the righteous judge make the proper distinction between the evil & the good, & assign to each his place & portion. Then shall he *present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy & without blemish* (Eph. V. 27)

Nothing that I have said militates against the rejection of unruly, obstinate, & openly vicious members from the communion of the Church, by the governors of it. Of open vice & obstinate impenitency they can judge. To that office he hath appointed them, & from them expects the faithful execution of it. But when they have excluded notorious disorderly & openly vicious members from the communion of the Church, their power of punishment ceases: All beyond God hath reserved in his own hand.

3. The third observation I have to make from the parable relates to the art & secrecy of the evil one in sowing tares among the wheat. This is represented as being so great that no human vigilance can prevent it, or scrutany discover it till they be grown up & by bearing fruit lay open the mischief that has been done.

While men, the servants of the householder slept, the enemy sowed tares: And when the blade brought forth fruit, & not before, they appeared in their natural form, & discovered what they were.

Evil actions take their rise from the thoughts of the heart; but the thoughts of the heart must be matured into action before we can distinguish the bad from the good.

The expression while men slept, implies no accusation against the servants. It only points out the cunning, & unwearied diligence of the *evil one* in doing mischief.

When the servants discovered the tares, they came with confidence to their master, &, in the conſciouſneſs of their own innocency, fairly represented the case to him. Knowing that they had sowed the seed which he directed, they were at a loſs to account how the tares had got into the field / And no wonder. The mischief was done while they were aſleep. But sleep they must, for who can watch forever? /

The master blamed them not. He knew the neceſsity of their nature. He knew that without sleep they could not live. *An enemy*, or more properly, the *enemy*, he replied, *hath done this*. No crime, no careleſsneſs, no negligence, no inattention is laid to their charge.

Nay as soon as they knew the author of the mischief, they readily & cheerfully offered their labour to root up the vile plants, & clear the ground of them. But here their zeal was checked, though their willing mind was uncensured. Not so, said the master. The time of retribution is not yet. Ye cannot pluck up the tares without rooting up also the wheat. Let both grow together untill the harvest.

Not only persecution on account of religion, & the ardor with which religious devotees are frequently inflamed, to turn all out of the Church, who do not exactly accord with them in doctrine, manners, & discipline, becauſe, as they expreſs themselves, they cannot walk with them, are condemned, but that petulence also by which the governors & clergy of the Church are too frequently censured by unthinking, warm-tempered people; as though they were remiſs in duty, & too backward in weeding the tares out of Christs Church.

Their own temper & paſsions have generally more to do in this matter that their religion. Touch their sentiments, & no people fly so soon into extremes, or bear reproof with so little moderation, or pursue their resentment with so great violence.

Whatever can be borne with in the Church without endangering its ruin, ought to be borne for Gods sake; in hopes that through his grace they will be mended; if not at once, yet gradually, & in his own good time.

We sometimes find the peace of a congregation disturbed, its unity & love broken by the perverse temper of a single communicant, whose enmity is excited against his brother by some lapse of which he hath been guilty: He conceives him too unworthy to communicate at the Lords table, & endeavours to make a party against him, covering his conduct by a plea for the purity of Gods Church, the honour of his Saviour, the spiritual good of the person he accuses. The friends of both parties are called forth; their tempers & passions are inflamed, the peace of the congregation is broken, & their minister must feel the censure of one side or the other; most probably fall under reproach from both.

Did such people recollect that the tares & wheat must grow together till the harvest, they probably would give up their own opinion to the decided sentence of Christ, & would behave with more prudence & christian temper.

That the Clergy should generally bear a double load of trouble & reproach on these occasions is rather unfortunate. They certainly do not deserve it. Though it would not be strange should pressure of circumstances sometimes excite them to play off one party against the other; for wrong as this may be, there is no telling what a man of good disposition may be driven to do to preserve his own quiet & peace.

The purity of Christ's Church, the unity & peace of its congregations must ever be dear to a Clergyman. His own peace, the success of his ministry, the approbation of his God, in a great measure depend on it. He knows however that he is set to build up, not to pull down the Church; that therefore the censure of discipline is very cautiously to be used, & then only when no chance of doing good any other way remains to him. |

4. A fourth observation which the parable of the tares furnisheth to us is, that as sure as the righteous & the wicked live here together, by Gods permiſsion, in his Church, so sure shall they be seperated at the end of the world: And that this seperation shall then be made by one who hath power to execute the sentence of his own judgment. The holy angels, at his command, shall then gather out of his kingdom, his Church, all things that offend, & them that do iniquity; & shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing & gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.

These are the expreſs words of Christ, & ought to make the deepest poſsible impreſsion on your hearts. They are too solemn, too awful, too decided to be fretted & frittered away by hypercritical distinctions & nonsensical metaphysics.

Of all subjects that of the general judgment is the most dreadful. It strikes the human heart with horror; It pierces through it like lightening; It rends & tears all before it; It sinks the stoutest heart into fear & despondency; for who can bear the scrutiny of God?

That scrutiny we must all undergo; for we are among those who are to be judged. Why then should we not sometimes reflect what the issue of that judgment must be with regard to us? The inquiry is an important one, & most nearly concerns us. If we be tares, the children of the evil one, the furnace of fire, where shall be wailing & gnashing of teeth, must be our portion, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. Jesus, the Saviour hath declared it; and whether his declaration deserves much, or little, or no regard at all, judge for yourselves.

Suppose, by strained interpretations of scripture, by the authority of great names, by the dictates of some person in whom you repose confidence — suppose, in short, it be true, that this furnace of fire shall cease to burn after a certain time, What do you gain by the discovery? Unleſs you intend to go into it, & make the experiment, it matters not to you whether it burn fifty, or a hundred, or ten thousand million of ages, or forever. Folish is the man who risks the hazard at all, when the means of escaping it are pointed out by God, & certainty of succeſs promised to his honest endeavours.

To suppose we ever can be happy with God without holineſs, is to contradict as expreſs a declaration as any in the bible; as expreſs a declaration as any that God can make, ~~&~~ as easy to be understood. To suppose we can be holy without doing holineſs, is to contradict as plain a declaration of St. John who hath said, *He that doeth righteouſneſs, is righteous, even as he*, Christ, *is righteous* (1 Jo. III. 7)

Of what consequence then is it to us, whether the misery of the wicked be of a shorter or longer continuance? While their wickedneſs continues, their misery must continue, for nothing but holineſs can put an end to it.

A prudent man would wish to avoid this misery altogether; And God hath put the means of avoiding it in hi power: Hath told him what to believe, what to, how to live; Hath told him that he himself will be his helper, his salvation, his God; Will carry him through all difficulties, support him in all dangers, & finally bring him to everlasting life.

The only reasonable conduct for such a person is to do as God bids him; to live as God directs him. He hath nothing to do with future misery but to avoid it altogether. Be it long, be it short, the matter is in Gods hand, & he will do justly, & mercifully. He needeth not our contrivances to direct him. He can settle the oeconomy of his government without our wisdom, & vindicate his dealings with men without our assistance.

Who art thou, *O man*, said St. Paul, *who judgest another mans servant*? And who art thou, O man, who judgest thy God? who pretendest to direct him in the distributions of his justice? who aſcertainest exactly what he can do, what he will do, what he must do.

Let these curious questions alone, I beseech you, & attend to your own proper busineſs. Believe what God hath said, for that is faith: Do what he hath commanded, for that is holineſs: And through faith & holineſs you are to inherit his kingdom, through the mediation of Jesus. If you soar higher, you encroach on his prerogative, & intrude into the things which belong not to you. What God hath declared is the standard of our faith & the director of our life; What he hath not declared can be no rule either of faith or practice to us.

That all men shall be judged at the end of the world is plainly revealed. That the wicked shall be condemned, & the righteous acquitted in that judgment, the bible leaves us no room to doubt. That the Gospel shall be the rule of the judgment of Christians we are assured by the same authority. This is enough for us: It at once ascertains what our conduct ought to be.

If we act as reasonable men, it will be our care to live according to the Gospel; in that faith & penitence, holiness of life, & purity of heart which it requires; in obeying its laws, in observing its institutions, in practising all the virtues it enjoins—fulfilling, according to our best ability, the whole will of God therein made known to us. So shall an entrance be ministered to us abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord & Saviour Jesus Christ, in the day when God shall, by him, judge the world in righteousness, & render to every man according to his deeds. (Acts XVII. 31. Rom. II. 6)

At which time, that we may be found of him in peace, God grant, for the merit sake of Jesus Christ, our Mediator & Redeemer. Amen.

Sermon the ninth.

The destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans.

The sixth Sunday after the Epiphany.

Matt. XXIV. 28:

For wheresoever the carcaſs is, there will the eagles be gathered together.

The Church having instituted the Festival of the Epiphany for the celebration of the majesty & glory of the Son of God in human nature, when he came to take away the ſin of the world, to make illustrious the Church of the Jews by the full knowledge of divine truth, & to open the kingdom of heaven to the Gentile world, that they also might be illuminated with the rays of spiritual wisdom & understanding; having declared the human nature of the holy Jesus, the Son of man, the Son of God, in the Gospel for the first Sunday after the Epiphany, which acquaints us that as Jesus grew up to maturity, he *increased in wisdom & stature* as other men do; having also proclaimed his divine nature & profeſsed her faith in it, by the appropriated Gospels for the following sundays, in which are rehearsed the mighty works which Jesus did — works which nothing leſs than divine power could perform, turning water into wine at the marriage at Cana, cleansing the leprosy, healing the Centurions ſervant of the palsy, by a word & at a distance, stilling the raging of the lake in a storm, casting the devils out of two men whom they had poſseſsed, & permitting them to go into the swine of the Gergeſeens; having on the last Sunday directed our attention to the awful scene of the general ~~of the general~~ judgment of the world at the last day, when the majesty & glory of Jesus will be displayed in the most august & tremendous manner; She, on this day brings to our view the unexampled & astonishing destruction which the justice of God inflicted on the cities, temple, government, the whole state indeed ecclesiastical & civil of Judea, on account of the abandoned wickedness & obstinate impenitency of that people.

That destruction was wrought by the Roman armies, the instruments of Gods vengeance against many wicked nations of the earth, & particularly against his own Church & people, sunk & defiled too deeply by sin & iniquity to be recovered from their pollution even by the furnace of affliction, & therefore given up to ruin & excision.

The discourse from which the text is taken is Christs own prophetic denunciation & description of that dreadful calamity, made to his disciples & followers, to warn them of their danger, & guard them against apostacy in thoſe times of tribulation & distreſs which were coming on their country. As the prophecy was particular & precise, ſo were the events by which it was fulfilled. They manifested the glory of Jesus, before men, as the prophet of God; &, in the infliction of the judgments which he had denounced, his divine nature & almighty power shone forth with lustre unclouded, with majesty incomprehensible.

The influence which this prophetic declaration of Christ against Jerusalem, & its exact fulfilment ought to have on us, is to lead us to full, undoubting faith in him, that as he is man of the same nature with us, & therefore capable of being touched with a ſenſe of our infirmities, & with pity towards us under our errors & ſins, ſo is he also God omnipotent, a Redeemer

&

& Saviour almighty, both able & ready to ſave evermore those who come to God by him.

The design of Jesus was to guard ~~them~~ his disciples & followers against apostacy from him in the approaching time of difficulty, & to direct them to a proper conduct under it.

Their danger arose from two ſources, the persecutions of their enemies, the deceptions of false prophets & false Christs.

He therefore forewarned them that they should be reviled, & hated, & persecuted, & some of them put to death for his names sake: That they should be brought before governors, & rulers, & magestrates, on account of their love & attachment to him. He tells them not to be dismayed or diſtreſsed in mind when these things came on them; That their heavenly Father was their protector, & would deliver them if they put their trust in him & served him faithfully; That because of thoſe persecutions & the hatred of the world, the love of many would wax cold;

cold, & renouncing their faith in God & their hope in him, they would betray & accuse their brethren, & cause them to be put to death; but that they who endured to the end, the same should be saved.

But the danger arising from the power & wicked spirit of their persecutors was not the only one they had to encounter. The arts of deception, as well as the power of persecutors would be opened upon them. Many false prophets, said he to them, & shall arise, & shall deceive many (11) and again, There shall rise false Christs & false prophets, & shall shew great signs & wonders, insomuch, that if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect (24)

That false Christs & false prophets did shew themselves soon after our Saviours death, appears, in one instance at least, from the Acts of the apostles. Simon Magus used sorcery &

bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that he was some great one. To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the wonderful power of God (VIII. 9, 10) Church history also informs us, that in many places he procured divine honour to be paid to him, as to God. Origine also assures us that Dositheus the heretic did perform wondrous things (Cont. Celsum p. 289)

The Jewish historian, Josephus, not only mentions false prophets as abounding in Judea, a little before the destruction of Jerusalem, but represents them as being magicians & sorcerers, & saith they deceived the people (Antiq. 20. c. 6) In his history of the Jewish wars he says (l. 2. c. 23) that in the beginning of the reign of Nero, Impostors & deceivers, under the pretence of divine impulse, aiming at innovations & changes, made the people mad; & by promising them signs of liberty from God, led *them into the wilderneſs*. And that they in truth prevailed on the people to revolt from the Romans; & encouraged them to expect help from God to the very last, even when their temple was burning.

Nor ought it to ſeem incredible to us that God permitted these false prophets to perform many strange works. St. John hath told us in his Revelation (XVI. 13,14) that *the spirits which came forth out of the mouth of the dragon, were the spirits of devils working miracles*: That the false prophets wrought miracles before the beast (XIX. 20) Of the ~~second~~ beast, which came up out of the earth, he saith, *He doeth great wonders, ſo that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth, in the sight of men, & deceiveth them that dwell on the earth, by thoſe miracles which he had power to do* (XIII. 13) We have therefore no reason to doubt the full & absolute completion of this prediction of Christ.

As to the expreſsion, *they shall deceive, if it were*

were poſsible the very elect, we are to remember that the word *elect* means the profeſsors of Christs religion — thoſe who have been called & taken into his Church by holy baptism, & thereby made his covenanted people: And the whole phrase expreſses not the effect which the endeavour of thoſe impoſtures would have on Christians, but the zeal & vehemence with which they would exert themselves: They will labour with all their might, they will do their utmost to make their deceptions paſs with the followers of Christ, & draw them to their own party. Besides;

If it be poſsible, is not the primary, certainly not the only meaning of εἰ δυνατόν. It signifies also, *if they are, or shall be able*, & so it might have been translated with equal propriety — *They will deceive, if they shall be able, the very elect*; that is, they will do every thing in their power, & use their utmost dilegence to deceive Christians, & draw them away from their faith in Christ, to follow them.

Here end the warnings which Jesus gave his deſciples of their danger in thoſe perelous times that were approaching. What other cautions he gave them are intermixed with his directions how they should conduct themselves when that time of trouble, & distreſs, & persecution came on them.

Behold, said Jesus, I have told you before— I now have warned you of thoſe false Christs and false prophets before they appear, that when they do appear you may not be deceived by them.

Wherefore, if they shall say to you, behold, Christ is in the deſert, go not forth; behold he is in the secret chambers, believe it not. The very place in which those false Christs did afterward appear, & to which they endeavoured to entice their followers is here pointed out by Christ to his disciples. According to Josephus, *Impostors & magicians persuaded the people to follow them into the wilderness, & promised there to shew them many signs & wonders done by the power of God.* (Antiq. & de Bel. Jud)

The word ταμεῖα, translated in our bible *secret chambers*, commonly signifies a *magazine, or storehouse*, & sometimes *a fortification*, & in that sense commentators understand it here, as refering to some fortified place in which those impostors declared Christ to be. Others understand it of the *private chambers of the temple*. But wherever they represented Christ to be, either in some fortified castle, or concealed in the private recesses of the temple, the disciples of Christ are cautioned not to believe them, nor to follow them, nor give themselves

selves any trouble about them; but carefully to avoid them, lest their deceits should bring them to ruin.

Besides; the coming of the Son of man to execute vengeance on the Jews, was not to be secret, but open & public; as easily descernable as lightening flashing from one side of the horizon to the other. *For wheresoever the carcaſs is, there will the eagles be gathered together.*

Common readers are apt to understand this diſcourſe of Christ, as being descriptive of the general judgment at the end of the world. But that it cannot relate to that event, unleſs it be typically, appears from several circumstances & expressions in the discourse itself. It is directed personally to the disciples & followers of Jesus, as people who were to see & bear a part in the tribulation of those days. Accordingly Jesus saith to them, *When ye shall ſee the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet stand in the holy place, then let them* *which be in Judea flee into the mountains. Pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, nor on the sabbath day. Except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved*, that is preserved; *but for the elects sake those days shall be shortened.*

These expressions can have no application to the general judgment. Christ, moreover, saith expressly, *This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled* — the men of this age, they who now live shall not all die, till all these things come to pass.

We must therefore look for some other event to which this discourse is applicable. And was there nothing else, the text would point out that event to us.

The eagle was the standard of the Roman armies, of which there were two to every legion. They are birds of prey; & one kind of them, ~~the~~ vulture, is noted for his quick scenting & feeding on dead carcasses. They are reported to hover about armies, especially in warm countries, for the sake of the offals of the camp, or of the dead bodies left unburied after a battle.

By these eagles, vultures, birds of prey, the Romans

mans are denoted, not only as they carried eagle for their standard, but because being a proud & ferocious people, they rushed on their enemies like the eagle on his prey. Particularly in their wars with the Jews, such was their implacable enmity, that they eagerly hunted them out wherever they could find them, & destroyed them without mercy; literally fulfiling the prophecy of Moses, uttered many centuries before; The Lord shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand (Deut. XXVIII. 49)

Therefore too is the destruction they wrought compared to the effects of lightening, which is sudden, & violent, & rapid in its operation, flashing in an instant through the air, passing, & rending, & destroying every thing it meets in the twinkling of an eye.

That the Romans carried the eagle as their standard, that they were as fierce, as determined, as sudden, & as cruel in their attacks as the eagle in quest of his prey, appears from their own historians. And never was their general character more clearly or horridly verified than in the invasion of Judea by Vespasian. His vengeance fell on the country like lightning, flashing with rapidity from one extremity to the other. Destruction marked the presence of his troops in one place to day, in another tomorrow; so that there was no chance of escape to those who had not previously withdrawn themselves from the scene of his devastation. Wherever the Jews were, there were the Roman soldiers after them, like vultures about a dead animal, till they were utterly consumed & their land made desolate.

Important therefore & necessary to the disciples of Jesus was the notice he gave them both of the certainty & celerity of the destruction of Judea by the invasion of the Romans. Its certainty was strongly & fully declared when Jesus said, *Verily I say unto you This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. Heaven & earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.* And its celerity was as clearly declared by the flight of the eagle & the rapidity of the lightening.

So great, so ſudden was this destruction to be, that there would be no chance of escaping when once it was begun. His disciples are therefore directed to attend to the signs of its approach. When they heard of wars & rumours of wars, when they ſaw nation rising against nation, & kingdom against kingdom; when famines, & pestilences, & earthquakes distreſsed the country; when iniquity abounded, & the love of many to Christ & his religion waxed cold; when they saw the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet (XII.11) stand in the holy place — most probably the Roman standards in the temple of Jerusalem — then they who were in Judea were to flee to the mountains.

But merely to flee was not enough. Their flight was to be rapid & quick, without delay or hesitation.

tation. He who was enjoying the cool shade of the evening on his housetop, was not to stop to take any thing out of his house; & he who was at labour in the field was not to return home to take even his cloths.

Great tribulation was then to happen, such as the world had never seen. Unhappy would they be whom any incumbrance retarded, whom natural affection to their children rendered slow in their escape. Unhappy too would they be should the necessity of fleeing their country come on them in the winter, when long & hasty journies are performed with difficulty: or on the sabbath day, when traveling would expose them to the interruption & resentment of their countrymen. Pray ye therefore, said the compassionate Jesus, that none of these incumbrances or impediments may happen to you; & for your encouragement, I assure you, that, for the sake of my faithful servants, those days of tribulation shall be shortened in their duration.

Of this earnest & affectionate notice of their master the Christians of Judea availed themselves most exactly. Before the attack of the Romans, they retired into the mountainous country of Pella against which the Romans had no quarrel.

There is one short reflection which I wish to make from the subject that has been before us. It relates to the suddenness & resolution with which the Christians of Judea were to quit their country, when they saw the sign of the coming of the Son of man, the approach namely of the Roman army. No time for preparation was allowed to them; & every thing they possessed was to be left behind them, if it would in any degree retard their flight. If returning from the field to take their cloths would delay their departure, they were forbidden to do it.

There is the same necessity why we should forsake our sins, if we would escape the judgment of

The destruction of Jerusalem.

of God, that there were why the Christians should forsake ~~Jerusalem~~ Judea when the vengeance of God approached. We are exhorted, enjoined, commanded to forsake sin, to repent as truly of all our wickedneſs, with the same earnestneſs & authority that they were commanded to abandon their goods & country. We are required to leave every thing in this world, if leaving it be neceſsary to the leaving of our sins. The right eye is to be plucked out, the right hand is to be cut of, if an unblamable, christian life require it. Nor father, nor mother, nor houses, nor lands, must stand in competition with our duty, by keeping us in sin against our God.

Think of these things; & may God give you grace to forsake your sins, & leave every thing that would expose you to his displeasure; even as the Christians of Judea forsook all that they had, even to their clothes, that they might obey Jesus, & escape the wrath that was impending over their country.

By so doing you will make God your friend, & put yourselves under his immediate, & almighty protection. He is able to make up all your losses to you, & to do abundantly for you, above all that ye can ask or think. To him be adoration & praise, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sermon the tenth.

The destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans.

The sixth Sunday after the Epiphany.

Matt. XXIV. 31.

And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, & they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

That there are two ſeasons of distreſs deſcribed by Christ in this chapter, is evident from the twenty ninth verse; Immediately after the tribulation of those days &c: refering to the days of tribulation of which he had previously ſpoken. That tribulation was the subject of the foregoing discourse, & arose from the invasion of Judea by Vespaſian the Roman General. But Vespaſian being himself declared Emperor, or, returned to Rome, & left his son Titus to finish the conquest of Judea by taking Jerusalem, the only place of strength left unsubdued in the country.

What follows relates to the tribulation occasioned by the siege & destruction of that city by Titus.

Immediately after the tribulation of those days, said Jesus, which the invasion of the Romans shall occasion, shall the sun be darkened, & the moon shall not give her light, & the stars shall fall from heaven, & the powers of the heavens shall be shaken.

The time when all this was to happen being immediate, that is, very soon, after the foregoing tribulation, obliges us to understand these expreſsions in that metaphorical sense in which they are frequently used in the Old Teſtament, & by ancient writers, as denoting the destruction of nations, & governments, & cities. Accordingly commentators have given us two explications of this verse.

The one is, that by the sun, & moon, & stars, the capital & other cities of a country are intended; & by those luminaries being darkened & falling, the destruction of those cities is intended. When Jerusalem was destroyed by Titus, the capital & all the other cities of Judea were ruined & desolated. In prophetic language, the sun & moon were darkened, & the stars had fallen from heaven.

In similar language is the destruction of Babylon foretold by Isaiah; *Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath & fierce anger, to lay the land desolate; & he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. For the stars of heaven, & the constellations thereof shall not give their light: The sun shall be darkened in his going forth, & the moon shall not cause her light to shine* (XIII. 9, 10) Of the Idumeans the same prophet said, *Their slain shall be cast out, & their stink shall come up out of their carcases, & the mountains shall be melted with their blood. And all the host of heaven*

heaven shall be dissolved, & the heavens shall be rolled together as a scrole (XXXIV. 3,4) And of Senacherib & his people; Lift up your eyes to the heavens, & look upon the earth beneath; for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, & the earth shall wax old like a garment (LI. 6)

That this language is not peculiar to Isaiah, we learn from the prophecy of Ezekiel against Egypt, And when I shall put thee out, I will cover the heavens, and make the stars thereof dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud, & the moon shall not give her light. And the bright lights of heaven will I make dark over thee, & set darkness upon thy land, saith the Lord God (XXXII. 7) The prophet Joel too declaring this very destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, useth nearly the same words with St. Matthew; The sun shall be turned into darkness, & the moon into blood, before the great & terrible day of the Lord come. And again, The sun & the moon shall be darkened, & the stars shall withdraw their shining (II. 31. III. 15)

The Jewish writers say, that the sun & moon being darkened or turned into blood, the falling of the stars, or their disappearing or ceasing to shine, are proverbial expreſsion, importing the ruin of a country by the destruction of its cities & the cutting off of its inhabitants. And if we look into Josephus' account of the Jewish war with the Romans, we shall find that three hundred & fifty thouſand perished by the sword of Vespasian; that Titus destroyed eleven hundred thouſand in the siege & sacking of Jerusalem, besides ninety ſeven thousand prisoners who were banished or ſold for slaves.

The other interpretation of this verse is this, viz: That the sun, & moon, & stars, mean the princes, & rulers, & governors of a country — the darkening of the sun &c: the destruction of those princes & of the government of the nation. Now all this happened to the Jews at the time of which we are speaking — a little before, & at the destruction of Jerusalem. Their princes & rulers were slain or carried into captivity, their city, temple, priesthood, & worship destroyed, & never yet restored: And a total period was put to their government ecclesiastical & civil; ſo that the remnant of the people scattered at that time from Judea, remain scattered through the earth to this day.

The verse previous to the text is in these words; *And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven; & then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, & then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power & great glory.*

The *sign* of the prophet Jonah was Jonah himself — the *sign* which was Jonah: So the *sign* of the Son of man, is the Son of man himself coming to take vengeance of the Jews. Nor do the words import that there should be any visible appearance of the Son of man from heaven, but only his local residence — Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man who is in heaven; and in heaven he was in his human nature, when the sign of his coming appeared.

Those strange sights of comets, & swords, & chariots, & armies in the clouds, mentioned by Josephus to have been seen over Jerusalem; & which some commentators suppose to have been the sign of the Son of man, happened before the revolt of the Jews from the Romans, & cannot be the thing here intended.

The coming of the Son of man in this chapter, means his coming to execute judgment on the Jews. The instrument of his vengeance was the Roman army. The approach & operations of that army were therefore all the visible sign, or token, or indication of his coming.

The expression, Then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, would have been as well rendered, *Then shall all the tribes of that land or country mourn:* The Greek expression denoting as well a particular country or district, as the whole earth.

Nor is the foregoing interpretation of the *sign of the Son of man* weakened by the subsequent part of the verse; *They shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power & great glory.*

Clouds & earthquakes are common expressions in the Old Testament, to signify Gods coming to take vengeance on a wicked & irreclaimable generation. *The earth trembled, the foundations of heaven shook, because he was wroth. He bowed the heavens & came down, & thick darkness—or a dark cloud, was under his feet*; are the words of Davids rapturous thanksgiving to the Almighty for deliverance from his enemies (2 Sam. XXII. 8, 10) *His pavilion round about him were dark waters, & thick clouds of the skies* (Ps. XVIII. 11)—

clouds & darkneſs are round about him; a fire goes before him, & burns up his enemies on every side (Pſ XCVII. 23) *The Lord*, said Nahum, *hath his way in the whirlwind & in the storm, & the clouds are the dust of his feet* (I.3)

Joel describeth the coming of the Chaldeans to the destruction of Jerusalem, *as a day of darkneſs & gloomineſs, of clouds & thick darkneſs — of darkneſs spread upon the mountains, a great people & a strong* — alluding to the magnitude of the Chaldean army, whose encampment covered the hills like clouds.

It is highly probable that St. John adverted to the destruction of Jerusalem when he said in the Revelation (I.7) *Behold, he cometh with clouds, & every eye shall see him, & they who have pierced him, & all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him*: That is;

'Behold, the Son of man cometh to take vengeance of this 'wicked nation, & every eye, even they who crucified 'him, shall see that it is he who doth it; & all the 'tribes of the land shall mourn because of his judg'ments'. Those things St John said were to be done *quickly*, & therefore they could not relate to the final judgment of the world, but must be refered to the destruction of Jerusalem which happened ſoon after.

The text then follows; *And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, & they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the one end of heaven to the other.*

The word *then* used by St. Mark in the parallel place — *then shall he send his angels* — shews that the text relates to the same time with the preceding verse, or, at least, to the time immediately following; that is, to the time of the destruction of Jeruſalem, or that which immediately followed: And any interpretation which refers it to another time, ought to be rejected. Accordingly a celebrated commentator (Dr Lightfoot) gives this sense of the text. 'When Jerusalem shall be reduced to ashes, & that wicked nation cut off, then shall the Son of man send forth his ministers of several nations from the four corners of heaven; So that God shall not want a Church, though that ancient nation be rejected & cast off; the Church of the Gentiles succeeding to them.'

In confirmation of this interpretation, let it be recollected, that Gods prophets, messengers, ministers are frequently called his angels both in the Old & New Testament, though commonly expressed by the word *messenger* in our bible.

In 2 Chron. XXX. 15, 16 the messengers of God are twice mentioned: In the Greek bible they are his *angels*. Haggai is called the Lords *messenger* in our bible (I. 13) In the Greek bible it is the Lords *angel*. The priest is called by Malachi (II. 7) the *messenger* of the Lord of hosts: In the Greek bible he is the *angel* of the Lord of hosts. He whom in Malachi III. 1. is called the *meſsenger* of the covenant is the *angel* of the covenant. By the mouth of Malachi God calleth the holy Baptist *his meſsenger* (III. 1) He is called by the ſame appellation in St. Matt. XI. 10. in St. Mark I. 2. & in St. Luke VII. 27. In all these places the word *angel* is used in the Greek.

Let it in the next place be considered that the preaching of Gods meſsengers or angels is represented as a *voice*, & as the sound of a trumpet. *Cry aloud, spare not*, said God to Isaiah (LVIII. 1) *lift up thy voice like a trumpet, & shew my people their transgreſsion, & the house of Jacob their ſin.* The preaching of Gods watchmen or prophets meſsengers is compared to the sound of the trumpet in Jerem. VI. 17 & in Ezek XXXIII. 3, 4, 5, 6. And of the preaching of the apostles St. Paul said, *Their ſound*, or voice, φωνη, *went into all the earth, & their words unto the ends of the world.*

world (Rom. X. 18)

If it be remembred, that the calling of the Gentiles, & their being taken into the Church of God, when the Jews were cast off, is represented by their coming from the four winds, or the four corners of the earth, & it will fully establish the interpretation of the text which has been given. *Many shall come from the east & west into the kingdom of heaven; But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness* (Matt. VIII. 11, 12) *You shall be cast out*, said Jesus to the Jews, *& they shall come from the east, & from the west, from the north, & from the south, & shall sit down in my kingdom* (Lu. XIII. 28, 29)

Having explained the text & the discourse from which it is taken, & shewn that it relates to the coming of the Son of man to execute judgment on the Jews, in the destruction of their country & government, civil & ecclesiastical, by the Romans; It may be asked, In what respect do these things concern us who live so long after they have happened? I answer,

1. That the destruction of Jerusalem, & of the unbelieving Jews, was an open instance of the indignation of God against obstinate unbelief & impenitency. It was an instance too of his love & care of his faithful servants. Attentive to the notices & directions of their master, the disciples of Christ quitted the devoted country in time, & left the vengeance of God to fall only on the hardened & impenitent among their countrymen. Great was his love in giving them the premonition; great was his power in preserving them from the ruin which desolated their country.

This ought to be ~~an admonition~~ caution to us, & induce us to us, to attend heedfully to the declarations & admonitions of Christ concerning our own conduct, that by obeying them faithfully we may escape the vengeance of God against impenitent sinners.

The destruction of Jerusalem was a completion of judgments denounced by ~~Jesus~~ the Redeemer, & therefore a ſure ground for our faith in his divinity to rest on. He who could foretell, & describe, & inflict those judgments on a whole country, & preserve his own servants from suffering by them, must be a divine person, the object of our faith, & hope, & obedience.

The destruction of Jerusalem being the fulfilment of a prophecy of Christ, a demonstration of the ſin of thoſe who rejected & crucified him, & of the wrath of God against them for their wickedneſs, had a direct tendency to prepare the way for the more free & full entry of the Gentiles into the Church of Christ.

All these things would be declared & explained to them by the preachers of the Gospel, the witneſses of Christs resurrection, & of all that Jesus taught, & did, & suffered in the land of Judea. The proof arising from thence, of the divinity of Jesus, of the certainty of his threats, of ~~the~~ the security of his ſervants under the protection he had promised to them, would be too strong to be resisted

sisted by reasonable men; And the probable consequence would be, the ready reception of the doctrines of his mediation & atonement, & a devout reliance on him for salvation through faith & repentance.

This effect the consideration of these things ought now to have on us. We profess to believe them all: They ought therefore to have their full influence on us, & lead us to unfeigned repentance for all our errors & sins, to firm faith in Christ as the Redeemer & Saviour of men, to obedience to all the commandments & institutions of God, & to a holy life of all christian piety & virtue.

2. The destruction of Jerusalem is a type & figure of the destruction of the world at the last day. In this light it ought to be considered by us, & applied to our own situation; for in this light it is considered by Christ, & applied to excite his servants to careful watching for the coming of their Lord at that dreadful period; & to such holy & obedient conduct as will prepare them to endure that scene with confidence.

Having in ſtrong & pathetic terms declared the neceſsity of watchfulneſs, because they knew not the hour of their Lords coming to the destruction of Jerusalem, he deſcribes the different iſsue of the conduct of the faithful & obedient ſervant, & of the ſervant who was unbelieving & disobedient, & regardleſs of his christian life. To impreſs the deeper the neceſsity of watchfulneſs, not only that they might diſcern the ſigns of the times, & avoid the destruction of the unbelieving Jews, but that they might be prepared to receive their Lord when he should come to judge the world, he added the parable of the virgins. The natural tendency of this parable is to convince them that watchfulneſs, & care, & an exact attention to the christian life were absolutely neceſsary to prepare them to receive the bridegroom & go in with him to the wedding, when, at the end of the world, he shall come & consummate his marriage with his Church, now betrothed to him, & take her to himself, pure &

unde-defiled according to the judgment of God, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. Jesus then concludes this interesting discourse, contained in the twenty fourth & twenty fifth chapters of St. Matthews Gospel (for the discourse is but one, though divided in our bible into two chapters) with the process of the general judgment at the end of the world; first of his Church, his own proper servants delivered in the parable of the talents; & then of the Gentile world, of those namely to whom the Gospel of redemption had never been made known.

The consideration of the destruction of Jerusalem leads, therefore, directly to the consideration of the general judgment & the destruction of the world at the last day. Of the more importance is it to us, to consider the destruction of Jerusalem as a type of the destruction of the world at the general judgment, because the preparation for that dreadful event lies in the same conduct that Jesus recommended

mended, & enjoined on his disciples, to prepare them for the coming of the Son of man to execute judgment on Jerusalem & the guilty Jews. If we maintain that watchfulness & care over ourselves which were enjoined on them, so that our hearts be not overcharged with the cares & pleasures of the world, & that day come upon us unawares; If we live in that faithful obedience to the will of God to which they were directed, doing the things he hath commanded, & forbearing the things he hath forbidden, we shall then be accepted in the Redeemer, acquitted by our judge, & welcomed into the joy of our Lord. But if we have been careless, unfaithful, disobedient, & impenitent, we shall, by the sentence of the judge, be cast into outer darkness, where there shall be weeping & gnashing of teeth (Matt. XXV. 30)

When this general judgment is to happen we are ignorant. It is not for us to know the times & seasons which God hath reserved in his own power.

er. Men die daily & retire to the dark mansions of the grave, & the judgment cometh not. But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, & a thousand years as one day. He measureth not duration by time & the ſucceſsion of events as we do. Nothing with him is past or to come; according to our comprehension, but every thing present. He is not slack concerning his promise (as some men count slackneſs) but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance, & therefore is his judgment delayed. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in the which the heavens shall paſs away with a great noise, & the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, & the works that are therein shall be burnt up. Seeing then all theſe things shall be diſsolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godlineſs [2 Pet. III. 8—11)

To us therefore the day of our death is as the day of

Sermons,

By Samuel Seabury D. D.

Bishop of Connecticut & Rhode Island.

Being Vol. 6.

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N. L. 3 Lent/95.

Sermon the first,

being the fifth on Christian ſanctification,
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Sacraments.

1 Theſs. IV. 3.

For this is the will of God, even your ſanctification.

As means & instruments of Christian holineſs; I come now to ſpeak of the Sacraments of the Christian Church: Not with a view to enter particularly into the explanation of them, but to put you in mind of your duty; to excite you to examin into your past conduct in this holy ſeason which the Church hath appointed for that purpose; that you may

be

see whether your conduct, hath, in this respect, been according to the will & commandments of God. Remember; He hath called you out of this wicked world into his holy Church, he hath given you the blessed hope of everlasting life, through his Son; & he hath directed the means & mode of life by which you are to attain it. He, therefore, justly expects that you renounce this vain world out of which he hath called you, that you faithfully abide in his Church, & use devoutly all the means of grace which he hath appointed for you.

The sacraments of the Christian Church are two — Baptism, & the Eucharist, or the Lords supper. By the former we are taken into Christs Church, are made members of his family, & through hope, heirs of the kingdom of heaven.

The necessity of baptism arises from the authority of Christ, who instituted it, & authorised his apostles & their successors to administer it. The benefits of it depend on Christ's promise. It must therefore be administered according to his institution, & by his minister, otherwise we have no right to claim the blessings promised to it. For the benefits annexed to his institution cannot belong to something else which we have substituted in the room of it, though we may call that *something* by the same name.

The Church into which we are adopted by baptism, we are told, was purchased by Christ, with his blood. He is therefore the king, & head, & propriétor of it. He called it out of the world. He seperated it to himself; & he gave to it the promise of eternal life. This promise is to be obtained by living in it according to his directions; doing the things he hath commanded; forbearing what he hath forbidden; holding the profeſsion of the faith according to his Gospel; exercising hope towards God; maintaining charity, or universal benevolence towards men; preserving the unity & peace of the Church; living in daily penitence for our sins; communicating in the memorial of his death & paſsion; & earnestly offering up our prayers to God, that he would, for Christs sake, forgive our sins, help our infirmities, preserve us in temptation, conduct us by his grace & holy Spirit, & finally receive us to his heavenly kingdom.

Among the other things neceſsary for us

in the Christian life, I mentioned *communicating* in the memorial of Christ's death for sin; that is in the holy Eucharist. This memorial is made before the Almighty Father, to plead with him the merit of Christ's death for the forgiveness of our sins, & the sin of the world. It was commanded by Christ when at the institution of the holy ordinance, he said, "Do this for a memorial "of me".

Both the sacraments derive all their obligation from the command of Christ. From nature they have no virtue, & lay no obligation of duty on us. That obligation arises from the same ground with our obligation to be Christians. The obligation to both sacraments is the same. The same authority which obliges us to be taken enter into the Church by baptism, obliges us to make in the Church, that memorial of Christs death which he hath commanded.

It may be proper to make the same observation concerning the Sacraments, that was made of prayer. We are not to suppose they make any change in God, but only as they make a change in us. "For this is the will" — the intention, the design — "of God", in all these things, & in every thing else in his Church, "even our sanctification": That we should become holy to the Lord in our lives & conversation, as well as by our calling & profeſsion. Let us then see how well these institutions are calculated to promote the spirit of holineſs in our hearts, and the practice of it in our lives.

What God hath said, & several times repeated in the bible, cannot be too strongly impressed on the minds of Christians, nor too heedfully attended to by them; "Without holiness, no man shall see the Lord." "Blessed are "the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

The obstructions to this holiness are our spiritual enemies, whom our baptism requires us to renounce, the devil, the world & the flesh; that is, the evil spirits of darkness, who having fallen from God, delight in all wickedness; & by ways unknown to us, tempt us into sin against him; the wickedness & corrupt principles & pleasure of the world in which we live, & with which the necessity of our nature obliges us to be closely connected;

ed; the evil propensities, appetites & passions of that nature in which we now live.

In various ways which we cannot avoid, & by various means which we cannot resist, these all combine their powers against us, keep us in bondage, & in a state of utter contrariety to the nature & commandments of God.

Having no strength of our own to oppose & overcome these enemies of holiness — for nature never can oppose & counteract itself — our whole dependance must be on God; his will must be our guide, his strength our protection, his goodness our support, & his directions the rule of our life.

By baptism God takes us out of the dominion of this world into his Church, &

obliges us to renounce all the enemies of his holineſs; That is, requires us to renounce all the inspirations of satan; which shew themselves in malice, hatred, pride, envy, & opposition to all goodneſs, so as no longer to be led & governed by them: He requires us also to renounce the spirit & corrupt principles of the world; which produce selfishneſs, covetousneſs, fraud, deceit, & every evil work which can prejudice our neighbour: And thirdly he requires us to renounce the evil propensities & impure desires of the flesh, all inordinate & sinful affections — fornication, adultery, ambition, vainglory, gluttony, drunkenneſs &c which not only prejudice our neighbour, but greatly wound & injure ourselves.

In this view is baptism a principle or

means of holineſs; & so is it as it requires us to believe all the articles of the Christian faith; that is so to believe every thing which God hath revealed for our salvation, as to live under the full influence of that faith to the end of our life. In this view the faith requisite to the baptised person, implies obedience to God in all things he hath either commanded or forbidden. Even where he hath condeſcended to direct the manner of any things being done, it will oblige him to regard *the manner*, as well as the thing itſelf, that his obedience may be entire & perfect.

In another view is baptism a means of holineſs to all who worthily receive it, & endeavour to live according to its obligations; &

that is, as it is the appointed means of communicating the grace & holy Spirit of God, to regenerate & purify the soul from all former sin; to be in it the principle of a new & holy life, & to strengthen & direct it in all the ways of Godlineſs.

When it is recollected that holineſs is conformity to the nature of God — being like him in the temper & disposition of our minds — it will be evident that it is the same thing with doing the will of God — living as he has directed. Whatever God commands must be agreeable to his will; obedience to his commands is, therefore, the same with conformity to his will or nature.

Christian holineſs is, therefore, neither more nor leſs than entire obedience to God, according to his will made known to us. And as the will, or design of God, is the sanctification of Christians,

— that they should be freed from the dominion of sin, & serve him — it must be his will that they live in exact obedience to him. Therefore are ~~they~~ they taken into his Church, by the stipulation & water of baptism, administed by the person, & in the manner which he hath commanded; to be there taught his will, & directed by his commandments to conduct themselves in all things as his adopted children, the faithful servants of his family.

St. Paul said of baptism, that by it we are buried with Christ in death; & argues from it, that as Christ rose from the dead, we should rise from baptism to holiness of life. — That the baptised person hath put off the *old man* with his lusts — hath renounced the wicked nature into which he is fallen, with all its evil ~~its evil~~

propensities, & hath put on the new man which after the image of Christ is created in righteousness & true holiness. He ought, therefore, to walk in newness of life; for how can he who is dead to sin live any longer in it?

The design of baptism, therefore, is to take us out from the fellowship of this wicked world — to remove us as far as possible from its evil principles & practices, its delusive hopes & fears, & to bring us under the instruction & discipline of the Church of God, to admit us to the benefit of all its privileges & means of salvation, to train us up in holiness, & make us capable of the happiness of the heavenly kingdom of the Redeemer.

As this life of holiness is begun in baptism, by the operation of the holy Spirit of God, so is it, by the same divine agent, carried on, on in the other sacrament of the Church, the sacrifice of the Eucharist, called also the Communion of the Body & Blood of Christ, & the Supper of the Lord.

At the holy altar we renew our baptismal vow, & all our obligations to holiness. There we ourselves remember, & commemorate before men, the death of Christ for us & for all men, & the many great & precious blessings he hath thereby obtained for us. There also, in Unity with the whole Church, we make, before the Almighty Father, the memorial of the Oblation & Sacrifice for sin, by the passion & death of his own dear Son which he commanded us to make — pleading his atonement & intercession for the forgiveness of our sins, &

rendering him high praise & hearty thanks for his mercy in our Redemption. There, exercising our faith in God & in Christ, we receive, in the sacred pledges of the Bread & the Cup, the life-giving Body & Blood of Christ, to strengthen our faith, to enliven our hope, to perfect our charity, to give effect to our prayers, & efficacy to our repentance.

There we receive more copious effusions of the influence of the Holy Ghost, according as our state & condition is capable of admitting them — to protect us in temptation, to direct & animate us in the way of holiness, to comfort the afflicted soul with the sense of Gods goodness, & support it with the hope of eternal life with Jesus. There we shew, &

keep up our unity & fellowship with Christ's holy catholic Church, with Christ its head, & through Christ, with the Almighty Father, the origine & fountain of all things; with whom is fulness of joy, & at whose right hand there are pleasures forever more; but with whom no impure thing can dwell, nor the impenitent sinner abide in his sight.

God having provided & directed these means of holiness for us, & the reward set before us being so exceeding great, both our interest & our duty require that we make a faithful use of them, as his good providence shall bless us with opportunity: Ever remembering that when we best

obey

best obey him, we most serve ourselves.

That there is no complete happiness to be obtained in this world, every considerate mind will allow. We must therefore look to another world for what we can not find in this. But to happiness in the next world we have no title of our own. From the free mercy & bounty of God we must receive it, & ought to look & hope for it only in the way that he directs. Our own schemes will here stand us in but little stead. What God hath declared must be the rule of our faith; what he hath commanded the direction of our life.

As by his Son he hath commanded us to go into his Church by baptism, &, in it, to do whatsoever he hath directed to be done; particularly to make, before the Almighty Father, till he shall come again, that memorial of his passion &

death

passion & death, which he hath instituted for our benefit: And since his Church still subsists, & hath, by his goodneſs, preserved those holy Ordinances which he appointed, with the authorised Officers to administer them, & constantly offer them to us; be not backward, nor ashamed, nor fearful to obey your God. So shall ye be his children indeed, & when this life is ended, shall receive the reward of children, an inheritance in his eternal kingdom. Amen.

n. L. 4 Lent/95.

Sermon the second.

Being the sixth on Christian sanctification.

Fasting & alms.

1 Theſs. IV. 3.

For this is the will of God, even your sanctification.

Among the means & instruments of holy living which God hath appointed for us in his Church, I mentioned fasting, or abstinence from food for religious purposes.

It is unneceſsary to take notice of the stated fasts appointed by God under the law, or thoſe which were directed to be observed on particular occasions, to deprecate the divine judgments; they must be familiar to all who pay so much attention to their bible as to read it.

The duty of fasting will, I presume, be generally admitted, as the dictate of nature, or as founded on an original divine command, & handed down to us by tradition. It is enough for my purpose, that when calamities have pressed hard, or the prospect of them was imminent, all civilized nations have recurred to fasting as a means to prevent or remove them.

Wherever there hath been any due sense of the providence of God; any settled belief that he does govern the affairs of the world, & does visit national sins with national calamities, there hath ever been a disposition to recur to fasting as a proper mode of expressing humiliation & repentance under the chastisements of divine providence.

Among Christians the opinion hath ever prevailed, that national fasts are proper to avert those national judgments, to which national sins exposed them.

Nor is there wanting full testimony in the history of the bible of the efficacy of public humiliation & fasting, to remove or avert or ~~remove~~ mitigate the judgments of God. There is no need of mentioning particular instances; let the case of the Ninevites serve for all.

I have thought it best to bring these things to your recollection, that you may note the practice & good effects of public & national fasts, as marks of humiliation & repentance: But it is not in your national but private capacity, that I wish, at this time, to recommend the duty of fasting to you. Every ones sins, indeed, add to the national guilt, & help to bring down the judgments of God. Every one, therefore,

fore, ought to join his own humiliation & fasting to that of the public; that as he has contributed to the national guilt, he may also contribute to to the national repentance & reformation.

to h.29

11 My view is to put ~~you~~ the reader in mind of that fasting, & abstinence from pleasurable indulgencies, which the Church, at this season, particularly recommends to her members, as a means & instrument of holy living. Her design is, that the sinful affections of ~~your~~ animal nature being disciplined & subdued by restraint, & brought into subjection to the will of God, ~~you~~ we may obey him in all things — living in that holiness & righteousness which he requires.

In fasting there may be various degrees. The greatest is refraining from food through the whole day, till the sun be down; & then refreshing the body with a moderate quantity of that which is coarse, or less delicate. In this manner the primitive Christians used to continue their fasts for many days.

The smallest degree of fasting is, the delaying our meals to a later hour than usual; or denying ourselves some particular kinds of food in which we take most pleasure. But we must remember that some degree of hunger, or sense of the want of food must be excited by our abstinence, to entitle it to the appellation of fasting.

When this abstinence from food is on a religious account, it is properly religious fasting, though it should not be carried to the highest degree. And every person must be left to judge for himself (trusting he will judge honestly, as in the sight of God) what degree of fasting is necessary for him, & to what height the health of his body will permit him to carry it.

Every man who attends to his own conduct, must be sensible that, let him be ever so careful & exact, he offends in many things against the rule of his duty; either by doing what he ought not to do, or leaving something undone which he ought to perform. His conscience is thereby wounded with a sense of guilt towards God.

Guilt of conscience needs only to be felt, to produce grief & sorrow; The heart penitent for sin, will lament its misery & implore forgiveness. The natural consequence of grief is fasting, & abstinence from pleasure. So that fasting is both the consequence & expression of sorrow for sin. And when the heart is penitently affected with the weight & burden of it, it will shew its ſense of its miserable state by every natural expreſsion of grief & sorrow.

This penitent state of heart, which will shew itself in fasting & abstinence from pleasurable indulgencies, & from which their principal benefit must arise, we ought to endeavour by every means to obtain. Serious reflection in the fear of God, & careful examination into our state towards him, become our indispensible duty.

We ought to call to remembrance, as well as we can, the number & heinousneſs of our offences; & that their recollection may make the deeper impreſsion on us, we must consider the holineſs & justice of God; that he is every where present, & sees & knows our most secret actions—the very rise of our thoughts & wishes; & that he does govern the affairs of this life, will one day bring every work into judgement, & fully recompense the evil doer. To this examination of ourselves should be joined confession of sins, & the discipline of the body by fasting; that every thing may be done to make the heart feel its corruption, & renounce the habits of sin.

Nor let any one think that these are idle insignificant practices. They are what the wisdom of God hath pointed out to us, to beget & keep up in us the spirit of holiness. For as the best means to obtain a devout frame of mind, is the constant practice of prayer & devotion; so the best means of acquiring a due sense of our sins, & a penitent state of heart, is the constant confession & lamentation of them, with the affliction of the body by fasting & mortification.

The denial of the bodily appetites will put us in mind, why the body is punished — viz: that it may be mortified & restrained; that henceforth we may not obey its lusts & evil propensities, but walk before God in newness of life.

The design of religious fasting, therefore, is to restrain & keep under the lower appetites of the body; to make us feel the evil state of our nature, & turn to God for deliverance from it; to give the soul time & opportunity, while it is engaged in this duty, to reflect on its own condition & ruined state by nature, & to fit & dispose it for the worship & service of God, who alone can be its salvation; to make us feel deep abasement, from the sense of the misery to which our sins have exposed us; to deprecate the anger, & implore the mercy & forgiveneſs of God; to expreſs our resentment against those appetites of the body, paſsions & evil tempers of the mind, which have led us to abuse the good things with which God hath bleſt us, by sinful exceſses; to exercise ourselves in ſelf-denial, that we may the easier command our ſensual appetites, &, by rejecting the enjoyments of of this world, raise our minds to a due value, & holy preparation for the happineſs of the next.

Another design of fasting is, to open the heart & hands to administer relief to the poor & suffering members of humanity, whose miſeries we shall the better estimate, when we ourselves feel the cravings & pains of hunger.

If we suppose this to be a natural effect of religious fasting, we probably shall not judge much amiss. That it will sanctify our fasting, & make it a sacrifice acceptable to God, we cannot doubt, since it so nearly resembles his own divine goodness, which "giveth us richly all things "to enjoy." //

Continued at p. 40

(For [illegible] at p. 40

Almsgiving was the last means or instrument of holiness which I mentioned. Let us attend a little to the consideration of it.

By alms is meant whatever is given in relief to the poor. Its quantity is to be ascertained by their necessity & our ability. Where their necessity is great, & our ability large duty requires us to give bountifully. Where their necessity is small, but little will be required to relieve it. When our ability is slender, duty demands what we can give. Almsgiving – a means of Xn. Sanctification

11 That God hath commanded us to relieve the necessitous, every book of the bible gives the fullest testimony. The adorable Jesus enjoined it on his disciples in the most positive & particular manner; & encouraged their obedience with the most alluring promises. He told them, that by alms they would lay up for themselves treasures in heaven, out of the reach of those accidents, to which worldly treasures are continually exposed.

His holy apostle St. Paul, in direct conformity to the spirit of his divine Master, among his directions to Timothy whom he had constituted Bishop of Ephesus, gave this emphatic one. "Charge them that are rich in this "world, — that they do good, that they be

"rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing
"to communicate; laying up in store for
"themselves a good foundation against the time
"to come, that they may lay hold on eternal
"life."

As it is evident from these two citations, that the giving of alms hath the promise of eternal life annexed to it, not only by St. Paul, but also by Christ himself; So it is worthy of remark, that in the language of the scriptures, *good works* mean works of benevolence & mercy.

Were I to aſsign a reason for this, it should, be that such works resemble the goodneſs of God. God gives freely, without any poſsibility of profit in return; & he who gives to the poor, must do it on the most disinterested motives. He can expect no return in this life. For what compensation can the poor make him, who have nothing

where

wherewith to help themselves.

That our alms may be acceptable to God, they must be given freely; not grudgingly or of neceſsity, for God loveth a cheerful giver. We must give, not only for our own sakes, to relieve the feelings of our hearts; nor merely for the poor's sake, because they are men of the same nature with ourselves.

Neither of these motives, it is to be confeſsed, are to be condemned. And it is devoutly to be wished that they who have no higher sense of duty, would more fully & frequently exercise their benevolence on these principles. But the alms of a Christian ought to be given for God's sake; from a principle of duty & gratitude to him, whose providence hath made the distinction of rich & poor in the world, & who hath graciously provided the stores of the former, to supply the necessities of the latter.

Were it not to answer this purpose; were it not to call forth the benevolent propensities of the human heart; were it not to exercise & perfect it in the heavenly temper of doing good to others, we can frame no satisfactory reason, why God, who is infinite in wisdom as well goodness, should give to any man more of the good things of this world than his necessities require.

The reason why God hath made the distinction of rich & poor in this world, most probably is, that the one, by the works of benevolence, mercy & alms, the other by humility, patience & gratitude, might acquire, & perfect those tempers of mind & dispositions of heart, which will fit them for heavenly happiness.

(The present Agrarian Spirit rage of politics, therefore, which so enthusiastically labours to reduce all men to a state of equality, is incongruous to the condition of our nature, & to the distinction which the providence of God hath made among men. While some are careful, & diligent, & prudent, & frugal; & others negligent, & idle, & profuse, & extravagant, wealth will be amassed & possessed in different degrees. Manage as we please, superior wealth will be superior power: Nor will there be any way to preserve equality, was it in being, but by frequently recurring to violence, & bloodshed, & murder.

Were it possible to bring all men to a state of equality, so that all might have enough of the necessaries of life, & no one be dependent on another, then none would want. The exercise of benevolence,

nevolence, & charity, & alms would soon vanish from among men; & with their exercise benevolence, & kindneſs, & alms would soon cease & be no more seen. Deprived of these qualities, man would be the most ferocious, vindictive, & bloody animal in nature.

The mutual wants & neceſsities of men, lay the foundation of the exchange of the mutual exchange of the offices of kindneſs. On these religion hath built her structure of benevolence. Were there no wants, there could be no charity among men. The poor want part of the wealth of the rich for their support, &, for their support, the rich want the labours of the poor. And God hath commanded, that when the poor can not support themselves, the rich shall supply the deficiency. — This is properly alms]

That our alms may be acceptable to God, they must be given freely, without compulsion, or even grudging; & they must be given sincerely, from gratitude & duty to God, whose instruments the rich are, to convey his bounty to the poor; & from love & affection to the poor whose necessity we relieve — if not to their persons, yet to their nature, as being the same with our own, & equally related to Almighty God.

All ostentation, therefore, must be avoided, both in our fasting & alms. If we fast, or give alms to be seen of men, to obtain their good opinion & applause, in their applause we have our full reward. "Thou, "when thou fastest, anoint thy head, &

"wash thy face"—make no parade or ~~bou~~ boasting shew of thy fasting—"that thou "appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy "Father who is in ſecret; & thy Father who ſe"eth in ſecret, shall reward thee openly," was the heavenly direction Christ gave to his desciples.

A like caution he also gave them concerning alms. "Take heed that ye do not your alms "before men, to be ſeen of them; otherwise ye have "no reward of your Father which is in heaven.—"But when thou doest alms, let not thy left "hand know what thy right hand doeth; that "thy alms may be in ſecret; & thy Father which "ſeeth in ſecret, himself shall reward thee openly."

These rules, except in public fasts or contributions, are to be regarded, so far at least as to exclude all shew & ostentation. They are the directions of him who hath the words of eternal life. They concern transactions which relate to God, & if they are mixed with vain-glory & a desire of admiration, they change their object. God is no longer regarded; popular applause hath usurped his place, & in popular applause we must seek our reward.

That both fasting & alms are means & indications of holiness will appear from hence. He who abridges his lawful enjoyments, that he may, with more certainty, command his appetites & passions, is not likely to run into wild excesses, nor to live in habits of vice, nor in a careless unthinking state about eternity. The same serious concern for his soul which excites him to fast, will teach him to pray, & will open his heart to administer such relief to the necessitous as he can. These good works can proceed only from the inspirations of the holy Spirit; & while that Spirit is not resisted & grieved by opposition, he will continue with him, will strengthen his weakness, confirm his resolutions, support him in temptations, & conduct him in virtue & holiness.

He who is ever ready to part with his money to assist the needy, from a principle of love & gratitude to God & man, can not be supposed to be overstrongly attached to the things of this world, but to have fixed his hopes on a better. He will probably pursue the road to it, & live in that holy obedience which God requires.)) Catholicus

// There is one caution necessary on this subject, viz: That we do not value ourselves on either our fasting or our alms, a duty whh ought always to be coupled with Fasting as though we derived any merit from them. They are our duty, & by doing them in the best manner we can, we only perform that which it would be a sin to omit.

Nor must we censure, or think ill of those who do not tie themselves up exactly to the same rule of holy living that we pursue. Perhaps they have not the same need that we have. Nor are they accountable to us, but to God, whose servants they are, & by whose judment they must stand or fall.

God keep you us in his fear & service, & conduct you us, through holiness, to the happiness of his own kingdom. Amen. // Catholicus

N. L. 5 Lent /95.

Sermon the third,

Being the ſeventh on Christian sanctification.

1 Theſs. IV. 3.

For this is the will of God, even your sanctification.

The design of Almighty God in all the directions which his Son, or the holy apostles, by his authority, have given to the Church, is the sanctification of its members: that they living according to those directions, might become holy in body & mind — fit inhabitants of his heavenly kingdom.

What these commandments are we can not be ignorant. Being delivered by Christ & his apostles, they have been recorded by the inspiration of the holy Ghost, & have come down to us in the holy scriptures, explained by the tradition & practice of the primitive Church. For,

The best way to aſcertain the meaning of the commands & directions of the scriptures, is to compare them with the practice of the apostles & first Christians — to ſee how they managed & conducted themselves under them. The apostles certainly knew their own meaning. Their practice will, therefore, be the best comment on the commands they delivered, by the Lord Jesus — the best expositions of their directions. And the first Christians, who lived in the time of the apostles, or soon after, by conversing with them, or with those who had conversed with them, had much better opportunity of knowing how they understood [illegible] the Christian faith, & practiſed its duties, than we can obtain from any other source.

Judging by this rule, we shall find that the duties arising from the commands which the apostles have given us us, by the Lord Jesus, & which most concern Christian holiness (in which indeed it consists) are, faith, hope, charity, penitence, prayer, sacraments, fasting, & alms. Of these I have distinctly treated. If not as fully as those subjects deserved, sufficiently, I hope, for your edification.

It remains now, brethren, & I beseech you, by the Lord Jesus, that you will attend to the direction of his holy Church, & employ this season as she hath directed. Employ it then in examining into your past lives; in comparing them with the commandments which the holy apostles of Christ have given you, "how you ought to walk & please "God."

"God."

If you have passed your lives agreeably to the commandments they have given you; if you have practised the duties of your holy religion, & cultivated those tempers & habits of purity which they have recommended by their example, bless God for his grace, adore him for his goodness, & be careful that you still so walk as to please him. Be careful that ye abound more & more in all righteousness & holiness of life, to the glory of his holy name.

Remember, therefore, that "this is the will of "God, even your sanctification" — that ye should abstain from all inordinate & sinful lusts, from every thing that can pollute the soul, or defile the body with sin — that ye abound in all the works of justice, & mercy, & truth, & peace. We

christians

We Christians, beloved, are not our own: Soul & body we are bought with a price, even the precious blood of Christ. We are not, therefore, at our own disposal, to live as we please, but according to the will of him who hath purchased us, & glorify God in our bodies, & in our spirits which are both his. The bodies of Christians are the temples of the Holy Ghost, & God dwelleth in them, except they be reprobates — except they renounce the faith & holiness of their heavenly calling. He who hath called them is holy; they must, therefore, be holy in all manner of conversation, because it is written, "Be ye holy, for I, the Lord your God, am holy".

Unhappily for us, we do not always live as we ought, nor preserve the holy character which was impressed on us by our baptism. In many things we offend against God, in many others come short of the purity of his law. Gracious is God, merciful his indulgence to frail man. Not extreme to mark what is done amiss through the weakness of nature, or the errors of the understanding, for the merits sake of the Redeemer, he overlooks, & passes them by. The mild terms of his Gospel declare, that against the pious & penitent Christian they shall not rise up in judgment.

But what can be said for wilful & premeditated offences? for habitual wickedness? for an irreligious, profane, or inconsiderate life? where no thoughts of God, of eternity, of duty ever present themselves to the mind? or if they do, are immediately repelled? & repelled probably with contempt? where the greatest crimes are justified as prescriptions of the reason & nature of man?

To such offenders, the deepest & most bitter remorse & contrition can alone open the arms of divine mercy. The tears of repentance only, through the atonement of Jesus, can wash away their foul stain, & restore the soul to purity & peace. Regard the words of the prophet in reference to penitence for such aggravated offences. "Wash "ye; make ye clean; put away the evil of your "doings; cease to do evil; learn to do well. Then, "though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be "white as snow; though they be red like crim"son, they shall be as" whitened" wool."

To set the neceſsity of repentance before sinners, to point out its means to them, to induce them to attend to their evil lives & reform them, was a principal reason of the apointment of Lent. These things, beloved, are worthy of your best consideration. For surely there is a God who judgeth the earth; who now observes your ways, & will one day bring all your works into judgement.

It is a fearful thing to fall under the condemnation of this God. Though gracious & merciful, long-suffering & repenting of the evil towards those who repent & forsake their wickedness, he will render indignation & wrath, tribulation & anguish upon every man who dieth impenitent of his sin.

All of us have need, brethren, to look to the state we are in towards God— to examine the condition of our souls with regard to eternity. The wicked, that they may repent, & amend, & escape the vengeance of God. The good, that they may persevere & increase in holiness; that when the day of God shall come, they may be found among those who have endured to the end.

Let us, then, all look back upon our past lives, & see how we have obeyed the commandments of our God? — how we have regarded the directions of the holy apostles? They have told us how we ought to walk & to please God, how have we followed their orders? They have set us an example of holy living, how have we copied it? [God is unchangeable — the same yesterday, to day, & forever. The same holiness that was formerly necessary to obtain his favour, is necessary now. The apostles & old saints were once such as we are now. They had the same nature, endured the same temptations, encountered the same difficulties with us. We have the same God, the same Saviour, the same holy & blessed Spirit of grace, the same sure hope of everlasting life, which they had. Diligent- & honestly they made use of the means of holiness which God had appointed, as the way of salvation; & in that way they have attained the paradise of God.

If we follow their example, we shall succeed as they have done. But what right have we to suppose that in any other way we shall attain the prize of our high calling? Hath God cancelled the directions & holy commandments he gave by his Son, & by his Apostles? hath he given us different instructions how we are to walk & to please him? How otherwise shall we venture to depart from the old commandments once delivered to the saints, & set up new schemes of our own invention, in the room of them? (Solemn, &c

Fashions in religion. Calvinism, Univer-

Hearing prayer Sermons &c

Fashion, I know, hath an amazing power over the human mind. Unhappily, its influence is as great in religion as in dress. The celebrated Calvin, from a sower, morose, vindictive disposition, ran eagerly into the doctrine formerly taught by St. Austin & St Bernard, concerning the absolute, unconditional decrees of God in matters of religion. They taught that he had elected some few to eternal life, in order to shew his mercy. But that to display his justice, he had reprobated the far greater part of mankind, & consigned them over to eternal misery. In neither case having any regard to the good or evil, the sin or holiness of the creature.

Calvins learning, violent opposition to the Pope, & dogmatical tone which he, on all occasions, assumed, gave him great influence among the reformed divines. The pulpits & press soon caught the infection. Little could be heard or read in divinity, but absolute election & reprobation, irresistable grace, & the nothingness — the less than nothingness, of good works: For some presumptuously taught, that good works, instead of promoting salvation, only sunk the reprobate deeper in eternal misery. The writings of St. Paul were perverted to establish this mischievous heresy, & St. James was almost banished from the canon of scripture. Calvins opinions became the sole standard among those who called themselves Protestants, by which to interpret the bible.

To this day the grand error of Calvins religion subsists, & salvation & its contrary are supposed to be fixed by an eternal decree, without any regard to the actions of men. With some the old superstructure remains on its old foundation, just as it was. The abettors of it being so persuaded of its sanctity, that they would sooner move St. Paul from his apostolate, than Calvin from his dictatorship.

Universalism

Others, keeping the foundation of absolute decrees, have varied the mode of the building they have reared on it. They reprobate none, but extend the election to eternal life, not only to men of all ranks & conditions, but of all characters. They tell us that *all men shall be saved*, & that without regard to their good or bad qualities. At least, that none shall be punished for their evil lives; but that all shall some time or other, & some how or other, be made holy whether they will or not; & carried to heaven, & made happy there, whether they will or not.

The same doctrine of absolute decrees hath reached the schools of Socinus, of infidelity & its sister Unitarianism; & we hear of Moral necessity, of the Liberty of neceſsity. What is meant by these phrases, will be hard for common sense to determine, while neceſsity must inevitably destroy both morality & liberty, & leaves no room for the judgment of God.

When the bleſsed Saviour was asked whether there were few who should be saved, he did not answer the question, whether few or many. But he plainly declared that some would fail of entering in at the strait gate which leadeth unto life. Who then shall determine a point which Christ thought was improper to be determined? This is a matter which God hath reserved to himself, to be determined at the day of judgment, when the secrets of all hearts shall be known, & God shall vindicate his ways before men & angels.

That all are redeemed by Jesus Christ, & put into a capacity of being saved by him; & that all who believe in him are thereby put into a state of salvation, in which if they continue to the end, they shall obtain eternal life, we know, because God hath told us. Whether few or many will avail themselves of the redemption of Christ, so as to be saved by it, is another question; a question on which God hath made no declaration to us.

In the time of their present life, he proclaimeth pardon & salvation to sinners, on their faith in the atonement of Christ, & repentance from the works of sin & death. Now, under this faith & repentance, we are to walk & please God, the apostles of his Son, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, have told us. They earnestly entreat us to attend to the holy commandments they have, by the Lord Jesus, given to us, & to obey them in all things. We shall shew our wisdom by doing so, & not by perplexing ourselves & others with curious questions known only to God.

~~Wholesome advice founded on the above~~

Why should a man risk his ſalvation merely on opinion, when he can have certainty? That he who obeyeth the Gospel shall be saved, we know with certainty, for God hath declared it. That he who disobeys shall be saved, is but matter of opinion. God hath not revealed it to us.

Reader!

Let such curious points alone; they will do you no good, & may do you much hurt, by keeping you easy & quiet in a way, which, whatever your opinion may be, God hath condemned. [illegible]

Fashions in Religion

Hearing prayers & preaching

Avoid also another idle, & still more prevalent fashion in religion — the scheme of being perfectly good Christians, & fit for heaven merely by hearing prayers & sermons; as tho' persons could be tickled to heaven through their ears. Hearing another pray is not praying. Unless you join in the prayers of the Church, they do nothing for you. No good can come from sitting & gazing. The worship of the Church is such that the whole congregation conjoin in it, & put up their prayers & praises to God, with their own hearts &

lips. They are not left to the expedient of having another pray before them in ſuch a manner as he shall chooſe. But being acquainted with the petitions & praises to be then addreſsed to God, they are at liberty from all avocations, to exercise the full spirit of devotion, in expreſsions best adapted to that purpoſe.

Stand not therefore at the prayers of the Church as though you were an unconcerned, or uninterested spectator, examining whether your minister prayed well, & had the true gift of prayer. This looks too much as though you thought yourself on an equal footing with your maker, & had no humility to expreſs before him. Remember, he is in heaven, you on earth. Remember also you are a sinner, & need his forgiveneſs, &, without his forgiveneſs, must be miserable forever.

Bow, therefore, your body before him; bend the knee in deep humility, in open testimony to all men, that you do bow & bend, every desire & thought, & faculty of the heart & soul before him, whose divine Majesty filleth heaven & earth; who is the author & giver of every thing to you, for soul & for body; who is merciful, & will receive the penitent to pardon, & life everlasting through the atonement of Jesus.

And give me leave to ask why people are so delighted with ſermons, as though the whole of Christianity lay in hearing a variety of preachers, probably of discordant sentiments. Too often you will be entertained with mere matter of opinion, poſsibly an harangue upon politics, instead of a Christian ſermon to conduct you in the way to everlasting life.

Unless, my friend, your religion mends your heart, fills it more & more with the love of God & man, builds you up in faith & holiness, it does nothing for you to any good purpose, be your opinions or politics what they may.

omit (Remember, I beseech you, that you are sinners; that what you want is the mercy & forgiveness of God, & let that sense of yourselves & of your wants regulate all your religious views & expectations.)

Unless your religion root out all the serpentine dispositions of satan from your hearts, pride, & malice, & envy, & hatred; unless it purifies you from the foul works & desires of the flesh & of the world, from all inordinate & sinful affections, from covetousness & love of the world, & of sensual pleasure, from ambition, vain-glory, selfishness, fraud, hypocrisy, deceit &c: it is vain & useless.

If opinion will do this, opinion is a very good religion, & a man may safely rest his soul on it. Nothing but such tempers & practises will keep a man out of heaven. And if he could go to heaven with these tempers, he would need no religion at all. Nothing else needs to be remedied in him.

To do this for us is the design of Christs redemption, by which he bore the punishment of our sins, paid the penalty which divine justice exacted, & made it possible for God to forgive & pass them over. That this might be done in us is the reason why Christ instituted his Church, that we being born again into it by the "washing of regeneration & the "renewing of the Holy Ghost, might, under the inspiration of that blessed Spirit of holiness, live the life of Christians, the life of faith, & through obedience to God, become fit for his heavenly kingdom. omit to p 63

This makes all the duties of the Christian life necessary for us, faith, hope, charity, penitence, prayer, sacraments, fasting, alms. "For "this is the will of God, even your sanctification" — that his children, the future heirs of his kingdom, should be holy in body, & soul, & spirit — in will & in deed.

In this way the apostles & saints of God, walked & pleased him while they lived in this world. Through this life of faith & holiness, they now, by the merit of their Redeemer, enjoy

joy the paradise of happiness — the mansions he hath prepared for them; &, at the end of the world, they shall receive the happy acquittal of their Judge, & in his triumphant train, free admission into his kingdom of life, & happiness, & glory eternal.

Would you share their blessedness? follow their example. Follow them in faith, & hope, & charity — in all the duties, & virtues, & graces of the Christian life.

Then shall you stand secure in the favour of God, & however many religions of opinion may buz through the world & draw disciples after them, his grace will be your strength, his Spirit your sanctifier, his Son your Saviour, his kingdom your inheritance & exceeding great reward.

To this kingdom, O heavenly Father, conduct us all by thy holy Spirit the Comforter, for the sake of thy love in Christ Jesus the Redeemer. Amen. // Catholicus

Good Friday.

Matth. XXVI. 38.

My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death; tarry ye here, & watch with me.

It was observed of Meſsiah by the prophet Isaiah, that he should be "a man of ſorrows & acquainted with grief." If we view him in his pilgrimage in this world, from his first entrance into life to the horrid catastrophe which we this day commemorate, the prediction of the prophet will appear verified in every particular. The family into which he was born, though of royal descent, was in low circumstances, & poverty & hard labour ſeem to have been the condition of his life, till he entered on his public ministry. During the whole of that ministry his poverty & labour still continued. Subsisting on the pious bounty of his friends, he constantly travelled the country on foot; going about to do good, without a home, or any place to lay his head, but what he owed to the charity of others.

The sorrows of such a life would have overwhelmed any one but him who could rejoice in affliction & distress when they contributed to the good of those for whose sake he was born, & lived, & died. And even these sorrows were doubled by the perpetual scenes of contradiction & persecution inflicted on him by the malevolence of wicked men, who daily misrepresented his discourses, perverted his actions, derided him as a drunkard & one possessed with a devil.

Besides; The prophetic view he had of the obstinate & fatal impenitency of his countrymen, which he saw would end in dreadful calamities & utter ruin, must have added greatly to the grief of his sorrowful life. Heart-rending must this source of sorrow have been to him, when it forced from his benevolent heart that tender & affecting lamentation which he pronounced over the devoted city Jerusalem, when, entering it the last time, he beheld & wept over it from the top of the mount of Olives — "If thou hadst known," O Jerusalem, "even "thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from "thy eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that "thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, & compass thee round, & keep thee in on every side, & shall "lay thee even with the ground, & thy children "within thee; & they shall not leave in thee one "stone upon another; because thou knewest not the "time of thy visitation".

But all this aggregated sorrow & grief was but as a prelude to that agony with which it pleased the Lord to bruise him when he made "his soul," his life, "an offering for sin".

Having celebrated his last passover, & thereby shewn himself to be that Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world, & who had been prefigured by every sacrifice of the passover from its first institution; under the symbols of bread & wine, he offered his Body & Blood to God, an atonement for the sins of men. This solemn scene being ended, he retired with his disciples into the garden where his agony soon commenced.

Many circumstances shew that the sorrow which Christ, at this time endured, was not only exceedingly great, but that it far surpassed any sorrow that was ever endured by human nature. Leaving his other disciples, he took with him Peter, & James, & John, & retired to pray.

St. Matthew informs us that when this happened, "he began to be sorrowful, ~~even unto death~~ & very heavy". It appears that his sorrow soon increased so as to force from him complaints of extreme anguish to his three disciples. "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death"; & begged that they would tarry there & watch with him.

Great must that sorrow have been which could endanger life — which could induce the innocent, & intrepid Jesus to ask the assistance of his feeble disciples. St. Mark observes that "he began to be "sore amazed, & very heavy" — to be filled with such fear & anguish, as made him restless & faint, & scarce able to walk. Nay so great was the anguish of his soul, that according to St. Luke, it forced a bloody sweat through the pores of his skin.

The earnest prayer which he put up to his Father to be delivered from the terror & agony of mind which he then endured, shews the weight of anguish which pressed on him. "O my Father, if it "be possible, let this cup pass from me". This prayer he thrice repeated; not only on his knees, but prostrate on his face on the earth — such was the intenseness of his desire to be heard. And as his agony increased, he prayed more earnestly; with greater & more vehement importunity, in proportion to the weight of the deadly sorrow which lay upon him. He offered up "prayers & supplications, with strong crying & "tears", saith the apostle to the Hebrews. Bitter indeed must have been that cup which forced such agonies of terror on the great Redeemer of men.

Its bitterness & deadly effect appear from the need of comfort he was then under, & from the support he received. He had requested his three disciples to remain & watch with him, if paradventure their company might be some little mitigation of the anguish he endured. And so great was the efficacy of his prayers to him who "was able to "save him from death", that he "was heard"; & "an an-"gel appeared unto him from heaven, strengthen-"ing him".

It is not easy to assign a satisfactory reason for this weight of sorrow & horror which the blessed Jesus at this time endured. It would not be the dread of the pain & ignominy of his approaching crucifixion. His apostles & many of his first followers bore the same, or equally severe bodily pains, not only without complaint, but with apparent joy.

It does not seem probable that his agony arose from positive punishment inflicted on him by God for the sins of the world. For it does not seem necessary that God should inflict any punishment on the wicked, besides the excluding them from his presence, that is, from all union with him, & leaving them to that state which their own wickedness hath provided for them. This properly is hell — the fire that never is quenched — the place of anguish & gnashing of teeth. Besides;

Christ was, at this time, performing the highest act of willing obedience to the Father — an act with which the Father was greatly pleased, & which he had promised to reward. The prayers which he offered up shew the highest confidence in the goodneſs of God, the humblest submiſsion to his will, & the firmest aſsurance of his favour & support. "O my Father, if it be "poſsible, let this cup paſs from me; nevertheleſs, not as I will, but as thou wilt."

Poſsible, in the nature of things this petition certainly was; for in that sense all things are poſsible with God. And when he was just afterward ~~[illegible]~~ betrayed, he told his disciples, & those who apprehended him, that he could pray to his Father, & he would send more than twelve legions of angels to his rescue. But it was inconsistent with the scriptures — that is, with the prophecies which had gone before concerning him, that he should be delivered from death; & therefore it was inconsistent with the plan & council of God.

In this sense it was impossible that bitter cup of sorrow & anguish could pass from him except he drank it; And to drink it, notwithstanding the reluctance of nature, he willingly submitted, saying, "Not my will, but thine be done".

That Christ did not suffer this anguish from any punishment inflicted by God on him, appears from what St. Paul hath told us, viz: That his prayers were heard, & he was delivered; not delivered from death; for to die for the world he came unto that hour. But he was delivered from his anguish & torment — & angel was sent from heaven to strengthen him under them, & enable his humanity to bear them.

"He was heard in that he feared"; or as it is better expressed in the margin of our bible, "He was heard for his piety" — for his filial trust & confi confidence in God, & ready acquiescence in the divine will.

There is one circumstance mentioned by Christ to those who came to apprehend him, which I have thought throws some light on this matter. Why, he asked them, are ye come with an armed force to apprehend me like a thief? I have, for some time past been daily teaching in your temple, why did you not seize me there? "But this—this night—"is your hour, & the power of dark-"ness".

It was the common opinion of the primitive Christians, that during his sufferings, the divine nature ceased to operate in Jesus; & that his body was given up to the will of his enemies, to be treated as they thought proper. This will sufficiently explain what is meant by, "This "is your hour, & the power of darkneſs"— This is the time of your power over me, in which I am given up to your will, & to the utmost efforts of the evil one, the prince of darkneſs.

When the devil had ended the temptations with which he aſsaulted Jesus in the wilderneſs, "he departed from him for a season"— not forever; at sometime he did return & renew his attacks. So watchful & subtile an enemy would most probably seize the present occasion to try the force of the most violent temptations, & see whether they could make any impreſsion on him.

If we suppose that as his body & life were given up to the will of wicked men, so his mind was given up to the utmost aſsaults of satan, the meaning of Jesus when he said, "This is "your hour, & the power of darkneſs", will be easily apprehended.

It seems, therefore, most reasonable to attribute that deadly sorrow & anguish of mind which Christ endured in the garden, to the fierce aſsaults of satan; then permitted to make his most violent attacks upon him; when the support of his divine nature was withdrawn, & he had nothing but the innocency of his nature, & the grace of God to oppose to the arts & malice of the inveterate enemy of all goodneſs.

If we extend this supposition further, & imagine that the devil represented to his mind, in the strongest manner, the great power & malice of his enemies, the Jewish rulers; the certainty & acuteneſs of the sufferings they would inflict on him; the impoſsibility of his escape from them;

the dereliction of God; the certainty that he God was now become his enemy, & would inflict on him the penalty of the sins of the whole world — the keenest vengeance almighty power could impose, & for as long a time as he saw proper, even till his utmost revenge was satisfied — Can we surprised that Jesus became sore amazed? that he was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death? that his agony forced large drops of blood, like sweat, through his skin? that dying with anguish he needed the consolation of an angel from heaven to strengthen him?

Remember, this very circumstance happened to him at the close of his temptations in the wilderness. When the devil had ended his temptations, he left him, "& behold, angels came & ministred "nistered unto him". The same supernatural consolation being afforded to him in his agony in the garden, makes it highly probable that his humanity needed consolation & strength on the same account — anguish of mind & debility of body in the greatest degree, occasioned by sharp conflicts with the powers of darkness; for on no other season of his life does he seem to have needed this miraculous interposition of his Father. —

We know that on his former assault, the devil attempted to lead Jesus into doubts concerning his being the Son of God, & urged him to demand stronger proof of it than the voice said to come from heaven could give. In this attempt he failed. But when he found Christ had devoted himself to die, his body to be broken & his blood to be poured out, for the sins of the world — to rescue men from that destruction which he had brought on them — When he perceived that God had, at least apparently, withdrawn his protection from him, & his divine nature ceased to operate in its usual manner in him — Perceiving also that the rage of his enemies was worked up to the highest degree, & fully bent on his destruction — What is more probable than that an enemy so artful & malicious, so constant & succeſsful in his aſsaults on the children of Adam, should seize an opportunity which appeared so favourable to his views, to renew his attempts on the holy Jesus, & endeavour to infuse into his mind doubts whether he were indeed the Son of God, the particular object of his love?

Whether this, or whatever else was the ground of satans temptation, through the goodneſs of God, the innocency of Christ prevailed over them all, defeated & brought them to nothing. That he was "in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin", the apostle to the Hebrews hath assured us. He hath also told us that having been himself tempted, & having felt the weaknesses of human nature, "he is able" & ready "to succour those who "are tempted".

That the deadly sorrow & anguish which Christ felt in the hour of his agony, arose from the violence of the temptations of satan with which he was then oppressed, appears most probable; yet there is another cause which may have contributed both to their degree & pungency, & which is seldom, if ever thought of.

That Christ had the power of looking into futurity, as well as into the hearts & thoughts of men, we have every reason to believe. To see how little effect all he was about to endure for men would have on a great part of them, how they would still love & live in those sins for which he was about to die, how slight the gratitude they would shew to his memory for all he did & suffered for them, how they would despise, without reluctance, the blessings of his redemption, & cut themselves off from the salvation he was working for them, & involve themselves afresh in the utmost misery, for which there remained "no more sacrifice for sin", must have beyond all conception have pained his benevolent heart.

It thus appears that Christ perfectly answered the prediction of the prophet — was indeed "a man of sorrow & acquainted with "grief". Thus truly did he say of himself, "My "soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death".

The same thing would further appear, should we pursue his mournful story — see him seized by merciless men, & conducted before the tribunal of his unrighteous judges — hear him condemned without evidence — behold him delivered to be crucified, by the mere force of clamour & tumult, & against the judgment of the Roman governor — follow him, faint & languishing unde the weight of his cross, to the hill of crucifixion, & there view the bitter pains he endured when lifted up on the cross for the redemption of the world — pains so sharp, agony so great, that his rending heart forced through his parched lips the pathetic exclamation, My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me!

Consider now, beloved, that none of the sorrow, or grief, or ignominy, or pain he endured was on his own account; perfectly innocent, he had committed no crime. But from the tender love he bore to man — to shield him from the impending wrath of God, to which he had become obnoxious by lust & sin — he was content to bear the pains & miseries of human life, & yield up his soul in the tortures of crucifixion, an atonement for sin, a propitiation for iniquity.

Remember, therefore, that this inestimable love of your Redeemer requires some return from you, my brethren. The return that he requires is, that you renounce your sins, & live a holy life in obedience to his Gospel. — That you trust to the merit of his sufferings & death as the price of your redemption; & to his intercession to make your peace with God, & restore you to his favour. — That you keep up a thankful remembrance of his death, by participating, as frequently as you can, in the sacrifice of the holy Eucharist in his Church, which he hath appointed for this very purpose; viz: to commemorate his death, & to make all those partakers of its blessings & benefits who submit themselves to his regulations.

An apostle hath informed us, that Christ came into the world that he might destroy all sin & wickedness, the works of the devil. Unless, therefore, we renounce the works of the devil, we defeat, as far as we can, the very end for which Christ came into the world.

Christ died to make atonement for our sins, & to reconcile us to God. It must therefore be necessary for us, that we obey God, & live in that holiness which he requires, or we cannot continue in his favour.

That we should with gratitude remember him who hath done so much for us, is most reasonable;

especially when we thereby aſsure to ourselves all the bleſsings & benefits of his redemption. And since he hath appointed a holy institution, by which to commemorate his sufferings, make a memorial of his death, & plead his merits with the Almighty Father, for the forgiveneſs of our sins, for the comfort of his grace, for the presence of his Spirit, for every thing we want, for time or for eternity; it certainly is right, & our bounden duty, that we should, at all times & on all occasions give thanks to his holy name in the way that he hath appointed.

Consider these things; & God give you his holy Spirit to conduct you thro' this world in his fear & love, that you may be partakers of his love in the world to come; thro' him who endured all sufferings, & died on the croſs, for our redemption; Jesus Christ the Saviour. Amen.

Easter sunday.

Matth. XVII. 22, 23.

Jesus said unto them, The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men; & they shall kill him, & the third day he shall be raised again.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead being the grand point on which the Christian religion stands, it becomes necessary that the proof of that article should be well established. Accordingly we find that Almighty God hath taken the greatest care to have it put beyond all reasonable doubt, both by the prophecies that went before concerning it, & by the clearness & strength of the events & facts which support it.

By the XV Chap. of St. Pauls first Epistle to the

Corrin

Corinthians, it appears that there were some among them who did not cordially believe the doctrine of the general resurrection at the last day. The apostle endeavours to convince these people, & reclaim them to the Catholic faith of the Church, by shewing that the general resurrection, & the resurrection of Christ, so mutually support each other, that one of them cannot be true, unless both are so. If there be no resurrection of the dead, "then is not Christ raised, "And if Christ be not raised, your faith is "vain; ye are yet in your sins."

According to the apostles doctrine there can be no resurrection of the dead but in virtue of the resurrection of Christ — consequently, no future life; no remission of sins; no foundation for the Christian's faith; but the whole Gospel, with all that belongs to it, will prove only an idle tale, not worth the regard of a reasonable man. For unleſs Christ, who is the resurrection & the life, the first fruits from the dead, be raised himself, what ground is there to expect a general resurrection of all the dead? or of any one person? And if there be no resurrection, what ground have we to expect a future life? or remiſsion of sins from the death of Christ, more than from the death of any other person, unleſs Christ is risen from the dead? Unleſs supported by this fact, the whole Gospel, teaching redemption & salvation through Christ, is void of foundation, & can answer no purpose.

By the goodneſs of God this article of our religion is surely laid, & our hopes built on it, are rendered certain by the event which the Church this day commemorates. Jesus is risen from the dead; there shall, therefore, be a resurrection of the dead. Jesus rose in our nature; our nature then shall rise in virtue of his resurrection, & according to his promise. "He that "believeth on me, though he were dead yet "shall he live". Jesus, who died for our sins, is risen again for our justification, & to open to us the gate of everlasting life. Hear his own most gracious words. "He that heareth my word, & "believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, & shall not come into condemnation, "but is paſsed from death unto life".

Let us then attend to the particulars respecting the resurrection of Jesus which the text points out to us, that we may see ~~[illegible]~~ what we are to believe concerning it, & on what ground our belief stands.

There are three particulars declared in the text.

1. That the Son of man should be betrayed into the hands of men.
2. That they should kill him. And,
3. That the third day he should be raised again.

The first of these particulars was fulfilled when the traitor Judas, one of his disciples, came with the armed band to seize him in the garden of his agony; & advancing to him, pointed him out to the officers of the high priest, by the respectful salutation of, "Hail master", & the kiss of pretended affection.

The second particular, "They shall kill him", was, with the sorrow & agony which preceed & accompanied his crucifixion ~~[illegible]~~ presented to your contemplation in the sermon on Good Friday.

The only point, therefore, left for our present consideration; & indeed the only one proper for our present meditations, is the last particular I mentioned, "And the third day he shall be raised again".

The proof of this great point of our religion rests on two things principally — the prophecies which had gone before concerning it, & the event or fact — that Jesus did actually rise to life again from the dead according to those prophecies.

That our faith might stand in the power & wisdom of God, the resurrection of Jesus was, ages before, foretold by the holy prophets, raised up by his providence, & inspired by his Spirit.

Of Messiah Isaiah saith, "When thou shalt "make

(used in part to p 123)

"make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his "seed, he shall prolong his days". This, & similar expreſsions in the prophets, can never be freed from contradiction, much leſs reconciled to common sense, but on the fact of Christs resurrection. How could he whose life was an offering for sin, had he continued under the power of death, see his ſeed? his spiritual posterity? sons & daughters born into his Church by the regeneration of holy baptism? How could he prolong his days, if death had put an end to them, but by rising again from the dead? No other way, than by the resurrection of Meſsiah — Christ — from the dead, could this prophecy of Isaiah be ever fulfilled.

Speaking in the person of Meſsiah, another prophet, David the king, said, "Thou wilt not "leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer my "thy holy one to ſee corruption". These words of David are by St Peter directly applied to the resurrection of Christ (Acts II. 27) as being truly & literally fulfilled in that event.

There is a remarkable coincidence in this prophecy & its accomplishment which is worthy of our notice. "Thou wilt not suffer thy holy one "to see corruption". Short is the period in which the human body remains after death, before corruption seizes on it. The text mentions the third day for the time of the resurrection of Jesus. The history of his crucifixion makes him to have given up the Ghost at three o'clock in the afternoon of friday. And circumstances shew that he rose at or before daylight on sunday morning. Between which periods there can not be more than forty hours. If we suppose him to have risen at two o'clock, there will be only thirty five hours

for

his continuance in the grave.

If to this circumstance we add; That dying in full health, there could be no preternatural tendency in the humours of his body to putrefaction; And that the piercing of his side with the spear just after he expired, let out a quantity of blood & water; & no doubt can remain, that his resurrection happened early enough to prevent any corruption of his body.

I shall mention but one prophecy more, & that is from the same prophet David. In Psalm XXI, he celebrates the victory & glory of king Messiah, the Redeemer of men. "He asked life of thee, & thou "gavest it him, even length of days for ever & ever".

The Son of God while in the vale of mortality could not ask any blessing from the divine goodness, which the Father was not ready to grant. Endless life in this world could not be the petition

tion of Christ, but that new, that eternal life to his humanity, which is consequent on a resurrection from the dead. This must have been the sense of the petition, for in this sense only can the grant of it, "length of days for ever & ever" be understood. Having died once a sacrifice for sin, he now "liveth unto God; no more to die; "death hath no more dominion over him".

And as this event was foretold by the prophets, so was it openly & in direct terms, declared by Jesus to his disciples. "The Son of man "shall be betrayed into the hands of men, & "they shall kill him, & the third he shall be "raised ~~from the dead~~ again".

Under the influence of the opinion which commonly prevailed among their countrymen, that Messiah should be a temporal prince &

& great conqueror, the disciples were at a loss for the meaning of this declaration. They had no imagination that Messiah should die at all; but supposed that he should live & prosper, subdue the nations & make them tributary to him, & establish Jerusalem at the head of the empire of the world.

What then could be the meaning of "rising from "the dead"? They reasoned & talked about it to no manner of purpose. ~~Possibly it was to draw some further information on this subject, from Jesus, that~~ Nor do they seem to have gotten entirely over these prejudices even when the event ~~of~~ explained to them the meaning of Christ's resurrection. For "when they were come together", after the Lord had risen, "they "asked him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time res- "tore the kingdom to Israel"? Probably it was not till they obtained more perfect knowledge of his person & kingdom, by the descent of the Holy Ghost on them on the day of Penticost, that they interely divested themselves of all their prejudices & worldly attachments.

Having thus considered the prophecies that went before concerning the resurrection of Jesus, & the declaration of Jesus himself concerning that grand event, let it be remembred that we have the concurrent testimony of all his apostles that that event did take place on the third day after his crucifixion. They saw him frequently after his resurrection; they conversed with him forty days; they ate & drank with him; he commissioned them to preach the Gospel in his name, & to persuade men to be reconciled to God through him; he ascended to heaven in their sight, & in the sight of a large number of other spectators; he sent the Holy Ghost on them, according to his promise; he endued them with the power of working all miracles; he appeared to St. Paul on the road to Demascus, & audibly called him, a persecutor, to be his apostle.

These are the principal proofs of Christs resurrection. The compass of a sermon will not permit me to attend particularly to them. Only let me observe that the collective force of these particulars establisheth the certainty of the resurrection of Jesus beyond that of any other event which ever happened in the world. No other fact is established with such a variety of coincident testimonies; diverse in themselves, & yet all uniting their force to establish the grand point in which they all terminate.

It may however be of more use to us to consider the influence of the resurrection of Jesus, on our faith & practice as Christians.

By ~~it~~ the resurrection of Jesus the truth of the scriptures, both of the Old & New Testament ~~are~~ is established as the sure ground of our faith & hope. God had decreed that when the life of his Son Messiah should be made an offering for sin, he would bring his humanity to life from the grave, & crown it with immortality & glory. He had declared this decree to the world. Unless the decree had been fulfilled, the truth or the power of God must have failed, & no further dependence could have been made on any thing his prophets had said.

Extend the observation to the declaration of Jesus to his disciples in the text — "The Son of man shall "be raised again the third day". Suppose now the body of Jesus had remained in the grave, & not returned to life — On what could the confidence of his apostles & friends have rested? What ground would their faith or hope have had on which to stand? In this state, without confidence, without faith, without hope, the two disciples, whom Jesus joined on the road to Emmaus, on the day of his resurrection, seem to have been.

They had hoped that Jesus, whom they believed to have been a prophet mighty in deed & word, before God & all the people, had been *he* who should have redeemed Israel. Their faith & hope however were blasted by the chief priests & their rulers, who delivered Jesus up to be crucified, & had killed him.

Again were their hopes raised, or rather doubts excited in their minds, by certain women of their company, who had been early that morning at the sepulchre, & declared that he was not in it; & that a vision of angels had informed them that he was risen.

In doubt of the truth of this account, they reasoned with each other, till the exposition of the scriptures by Jesus who had joined their company, & his manifestation of himself now risen from the dead, set them right; & convinced them, that *he* whom they had regarded as a mighty prophet, who they trusted would have redeemed Israel, whom their priests had delivered to be crucified, & had actually killed, was really & truly risen from the dead.

Then, & not till then, had they full & sure ground of certainty for faith & hope. Then could they with confidence trust that it was he who should indeed redeem Israel.

Thus must it have been with all the rest of Christs disciples & followers. Their faith & hope were buried in the same grave with Christ, & nothing but his resurrection could again raise, & give energy to them.

Had Jesus never risen, we should never have heard a word of Christianity, nor of the Gospel of salvation, nor of the good will of God to man, nor of life eternal, nor of Jesus Christ, but as an impostor who had suffered an ignominious death for his villany. But glory to God, Jesus is risen from the dead; the scriptures of God are true; the promises of God are certain; our faith is firm; our hope is ſure; glory & immortality are before us, & within our reach. Again;

The resurrection of Jesus gives validity to the authority of his apostles to publish the glad tidings of salvation through him to the world.

When we consider the station of life from which the apostles were called to preach the Gospel, their ignorance of the learning of the world, & of the popular arts of persuasion, it is impoſsible to suppose they could have met with any great succeſs in converting the Gentiles to a religion, whose principles contradicted all worldly views, & whose precepts required the restriction of the strongest paſsions & appetites of human nature; unleſs they had been supported by power superior to the force of paſsion

&

& appetite, & to all the interests of this world; especially as they made it no secret that the author of their religion had been crucified at Jerusalem as a malefactor.

The circumstance of Christ's resurrection, & the ability to work miracles in his name enabled them to confirm the Gospel which he had commissioned them to preach; & together with the heavenly nature of its doctrines, proved superior to all the philosophy & learning of men, to the strength of their religious prejudices & habits, & to the force of appetite & passion, & of all worldly views & interests.

The preaching of the apostles was ever on this ground. They declared that Jesus was the Redeemer of the world; that his death, though brought on him by the malice of the Jews, was a sin-offering for man, & made atonement for him with God; that God accepted it as such, & had declared his acceptance by raising him from the dead according to the predictions of the prophets; that they had seen & conversed with him after his resurrection; that he had sent them to preach salvation through him, & had confered on them the power of working miracles in confirmation of what they declared; that of themselves they could do nothing, but only as Christ gave them commandment & power; nor say any thing, but as they were moved by the Holy Ghost whom he had sent on them. And lastly,

They declared, that as God had raised him from the dead, he had also visibly taken him up into heaven, had put all things in subjection to him, & had constituted him the final Judge of all men. That, in consequence of this appointment, he required all men every where to repent & forsake sin, & to rely on him as the propitiation ~~for their~~ & atonement for it ~~sins~~, & to live as he directed, in holiness & righteousness ~~as he directed~~, to the end of their lives; that then he would take those who obeyed him to happiness with himself, & at the end of the world would raise their dead bodies to life & immortality with him in heaven.

This was the substance of ~~the~~ their preaching; from which if we leave the article of Christs resurrection, we destroy its whole force & power. Would it appear that God had accepted his death as an atonement for sin, if Christ had remained under the power of death? or that there would be any resurrection of the dead? or any future life? or any remission of sins? And unless these points were established, Who would have received the Gospel, or have depended on any of its promises?

As therefore it was necessary, according as the wisdom & goodness of God had determined, that Christ should die for sin, that it might be possible for God to forgive it; so was it also necessary that he should rise from death & enter into glory, that all they who believed on him, might rise through him, from temporal death to everlasting life.

Therefore hath God set this article of our faith on such ground as cannot be invalidated. He declared by his prophets that it should happen; Christ himself prefixed the precise time — the third day. The fact is said to have been so. The body was missing; & his enemies were unable to give any account of it — nothing but the stupid story, that his disciples came by night & stole it away. Yet they had buried it, secured the sepulchre with a great stone, sealed it with their seal, & set a guard of Roman soldiers over it, sufficient in their opinion to guard it from all intrusion.

The apostles of Christ preached & declared his resurrection, openly & publicly, even to the faces of those very priests & rulers who by clamor had prevailed on Pilate to crucify him. In confirmation of their testimony, they wrought the most astonishing miracles, before enemies as well as friends, & at last sealed their testimony with their lives. Fuller, stronger evidence it is impossible any fact can have. So full, so strong, evidence no other fact ever yet hath had.

Let us, beloved brethren, constantly beg of God his Holy Spirit, that we may ever abide stedfastly in the faith of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, so surely established by the holy scriptures,

tures, by the testimony of his apostles & Church.

Let us also ever devoutly thank God for the inestimable blessing of the resurrection of his dear Son, & for the abundant proof with which he hath established the ~~proof~~ belief of it.

In consequence of this faith, & thankful disposition, let us beg his heavenly Grace, that we may die to sin & rise again to newness of life; that being, in this life, conformed to the death & resurrection of Jesus, we may, when he shall appear again in glory, be made like unto him in his eternal & glorious kingdom.

CALENDAR OF MANUSCRIPTS

BOX NO.__________
FOLDER NO.________

TITLE OF COLLECTION: Bishop Seabury Papers

PROVENANCE:

SUBJECT: Sermons - undated and arranged according to text

NO.	DATE	ITEM	PP.	REMARKS
1		Sermon on Gen.II:7	20	
2		Sermon on Gen.II:7	21	
3		Sermon on Psalm 19:4	24	
4		Sermon on Prov.I:7		(old prescriptions in Bp. Seabury's writing on centre facing pages)
5		Three Sermons:	(54)	
		1. Isaiah 40:6,7,8	17	
		2. I Peter I:24,25	18	
		3. "in the same text"	19	
6		Sermon on Malachi I:11	58	
7		Sermon on Matt.4:23	14	
8		Sermon on Mark 7:36	16	
9		Two Sermons:		
		1. Luke 6:36	15	
		2. Heb.10:14	6	
10		Sermon on Luke 14:24	31	
11		Sermon on Luke 19:9	15	
12		Two Sermons:	(26)	
		1. John I:34	12	
		2. Matt.III:15	12	
13		Sermon on John 4:48	16	
14		Sermon on John 9:4	39	
15		Sermon on John 13:17	14	
16		Two Sermons:		
		1. Rom.8:12,13	16	
		2.Rom.8:17	15	

CALENDAR OF MANUSCRIPTS

BOX NO.
FOLDER NO.

TITLE OF COLLECTION: Bishop Seabury Papers

PROVENANCE:

SUBJECT: Sermons - undated and arranged according to text

NO.	DATE	ITEM	PP.	REMARKS
17		Two Sermons and Notes:		
		1. I Cor.4:1,2	6	
		2. Notes on Luke 8:18	1	
		3. Gal.3:6,7	4	
18		Sermon Notebook?		
19		Sermon on Phil.II:5	41	
20		Sermon on Col.I:9-12	33	
21		Sermon on Col.III:17	30	
22		Sermon (fragmentary)	70	

Sermons of
Bp Seabury
Not dated
by him

Some in Bp Seabury's
handwriting and some
copied by his son the
Rev. Charles Seabury
of Setauket Long Island

No. 1.

The Creation of Adam.

Gen ii.7.

And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, & breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; & man became a living ſoul.

Observa
tion

It being in the
Xt that he should
from their sins, th
having affirmed th
tion in none oth
is none other n
~~[illegible]~~
given amo
~~[illegible]~~
(Acts. 4.12) St P
clared that as th
there is one me
& men, the M
It becomes a
cern to us, h

MUTILATED IN ORIGINAL

[illegible]

[illegible]

It being in the

21 that the Farm

from Hans Kirk

having informed

him [illegible]

of [illegible] 1822

[illegible]

[illegible]

Ch. A. B.

[illegible]

Ann [illegible]

[illegible]

Moses having ascertained the being power & goodness of God by the history of the creation, proceeds to point out the relation in which man stands to him & to the other order of beings both above & below him, by giving a more particular account of his formation, which he has done in the words of the text.

How the various animals of this world were produced he has particularly told us — by the command of G, the waters & the earth respectively brought forth those which were proper for those elements — He spake it was done; He commanded & they were made. These animals appear, both from their origine, & from our own observation, to belong merely to this world, & here to be capable of their full enjoyment & happiness.

As these animals are evidently below man in their nature & faculties, so we learn from divine revelation, that there are beings of an order & nature superior to him, whom we distinguish by the appellation of Angels. Of their creation Moses says nothing, because he confines his history to the creation of this world & of man its inhabitant, & of ye dealing of G with him. But of the being & agency of the Angels he bears ample testimony in his writings. The other books of S. also often mention & describe them as beings sp[ir]l & glorious, employed by Alm. G. to execute his will & do his pleasure.

~~Between these~~ These Angels are represented as being of different orders & degrees — every order having a head or prince over it, & are ~~represented to~~ said to stand~~ing~~ in the presence of G., #ever ready to ~~do &~~ execute his commands. They ~~also~~ make the retinue of the d. majesty; so that wherever the Angels are, there G. is ~~said~~ to be more immediately present.

Some of these Angels ~~we~~ are informed, ~~fell from~~ probably ~~one~~ whole order, fell from the state of their creation

Your Friend & the Serv
Wm. Thompson

Right Rev. Dr. Seabury

creation by forming against their maker; & thereby became filled with envy & malice. St Paul has informed us that pride was their crime. They it seems being lifted up by the powers of their nature, & the exalted station which they held, forgot their dependance on him that made them, & arrogantly attempted to be the contrivers of their own happiness, & to live by their own will.

Between these two orders of beings, the brute animals of the world, & the Angelic hosts, there is manifestly an immense distance, the one is earthly & bestial, the other spiritual & heavenly, the one confined to

derable part of our Church. I wish sincerely that we could have converted him to have tarried with us during the Winter as I think a measure of that sort would in some degree tend to heal the unhappy differences that subsist amongst us. For I find that we are by no means nearer being united than when our late worthy friend Mr Sayre

(5)

to the earth both in its nature & enjoyments, the other inhabitants of of heaven, & blessed with the presence of God; the faculties of the one ~~is~~ are of the lowes degree, consisting merely of ~~x~~ ~~[illegible]~~ ~~[illegible]~~ sensitive powers & the influence of instinct; the other at least rational in the highest degree, ~~[illegible]~~ if not happy in the most perfect intuition that can belong to any creature.

It is observable that all the works of G. are in a regular chain of connection, rising from inanimate matter thro' various degrees of vegetation & animation up to the highest degree of intelligence. Such a being as man was created ſeems to have been wanting to fill up the amazing chasm that there was between the brute animals of this world & the angelic orders. Such evidently G made him; allied to the animals of this world in his body, & to the ~~A~~ angels in his ſoul, or ſpiritual part.

If we look to his body only we shall find him a perfect animal, partaking, with ~~them~~ other animals, of ſenſations & perceptions, obtained too in the ſame way, by his bodily ſenses, & having nearly the ſame instincts & propensities with them. But if we look

to

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Bp ~~Seabury~~

of Connecticut

~~New London~~

this soul or spiritual part, we shall find him, even now in his fallen, degenerate state, allied to the angels, in the faculties of reason, understanding & freedom of will, in the powers of imagination, & in the sensibility of the distinction between moral ~~good~~ & evil; ~~capacity of judging or determining the same~~ ~~chosen~~ What then must he have ~~h~~been in that perfection of his nature in which he was originally created? Let us then attend to the account which Moses, by the inspiration of the H. G. hath given of the creation of the first man, for from him only can we form a judgmen of the intention of the Alm. creator in the formation of this creature to fill up the gap that was left in his works, & join by a new link the chain of connection between the beings of this & of the heavenly world.

When Moses had finished the history of the creation of the heavens & earth, of the sun, moon, & starrs — of the production of vegetables & animals on the earth & in the Waters, — & all things were ready for the introduction of its principal inhabitant, we find an account of a d. conſultati-on reſpecting his creation, nothing of which appears in the creation of the animals of the world. With regard to them he spake & the earth & Waters brought them into being. The command or word of G produced them just as it had done the vegetables which cover the face of ye earth. But with regard to man, G ſaid, Let us &c The unity of G is acknowledged by all who believe di R. or who abide by the dictates of reaſon. There can be but one ſelf-existing, independent, & all perfect being. What then gave occaſion to this form of ſpeech, Let us &c: Nor is this mode of speech confined to this one instance — man is become like one of us — Let us go down &c: Whom shall we send? — Who will go for us? Isa. 6. 8 To say ~~[illegible]~~ with the Jews, that G in these instances addresses himself ~~[illegible]~~ to his Angels is absurd. It has neither authority of S nor reason to support it. Nor can we suppose G to speak after the manner of earthly kings & princes. For when this was spoken there was no earthly king subsisting. For a soluti-on of this difficulty we must there-fore ~~suppose~~ recur to that plurality of coeternal & coequal persons in the d. essence of which revelation informs us.

So much of the mystery of the adorable Δ as was necessary to give a solid foundation to our faith & hope in J. Xt as the Redeemer of the world & our mediator with God, God hath been pleased to make known to us in ye N.T. perhaps as fully as our faculties are capable of conceiving it, ~~in the N.T.~~

7 And it ought to be a comfort & source of joy to us, to find the same d. mystery intimated tho' in obscure terms to the ser-

vants of G from the beginning, even at the creation of man who was made to bear the image of his creator, & consequently to exhibit, as in a Glass the mystery of the adorable Δy. ~~In~~

The faith of the Xn Xx therefore — that there is One God in three persons, is the original & true faith, the foundation of all true religion from the beginning of the world — on it is grounded the whole mystery of our redn, & on it rests the possibility of our salvation,

Bishop of Connecticut
New London

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because without this distinction in the Godhead there could have been no S. of G. to redeem us, nor any H.G. to sanctify & renew our natures. Holding fast this faith, let us, with grateful hearts, acknowledge the goodness of G. in revealing it to us from the beginning of the world, & in preserving the knowledge of it as this h. Xt. to be the ground of our hope & confidence in him.

It being determined in the d. council, that man should be made in the image of G., God first made his body of the dust of the ground. The distinction between

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Newport 14th January 1789

Rt Revd & Dear Sir

I am now to acknowledge the Honor you did me by your Letter of the 24 Decemr last in which you were pleased to recommend the Revd Dr Nisbett: That Gentleman's Visit I can assure you has given me much Pleasure and satisfaction, as it has also done to a consitween the creation of the h. body & of the animals of the world. With regard to them the earth & waters produced them at the command of God. But with regard to man his body was the immediate work of G. himself. He did not command the earth to bring him forth but he made him of the dust of the ground formed him according to the determination of infinite wisdom & goodness. This should teach us the dignity & excellency of the h. body above the bodies of the

was with us notwithstanding what his opponents urged that he was the sole cause of our unhappiness and indeed I begin to be more and convinced of what I have long suspected that it is not the Man but the Church that they are contending with. May they be disappointed is my most earnest wish. The Family join me in wishing you health & happiness. I am with real Regard the brute animals, & lead us to reverence & esteem them accordingly; as being the immediate work of G; formed by his own hands: And therefore not to be defiled & debased by the indulgence of those enjoyments which make no distinction between the man & the brute. That man in his present state has some appetites and propensities in common with the brute animals can not be denied. And tho they are necessary to his presence subsistence, yet the knowledge of the higher dignity of his own body ought to prevent his placing his happiness in gratification, & to make them each ones test, by pursuing them to excess, he degrades himself to the level of the beasts that perish.

2. Obs. Man being made of the dust of the ground evidently has his body from this world. His body must, therefore, partake of the nature of the elements of this world, & ~~therefore~~, must be subject to their changes, ~~as well as~~ to be ~~affected~~ disposed by them, as well as to ~~&~~ receive impressions from them from its own nat. It can not, therefore, be here in a fixed & immutable condition.

And tho' most of the changes & decays to which the things of this world are ~~liable~~ not only liable but do daily ſuffer were, according to the testimony of d. revn., brought on them by the fall of man from the ſtate of his creation into sin & rebellion against his creator, (The whole creation travaileth &c) yet whatever was the nat. of the elements in their original creation, that, at least in ſome degree, must have been the nat. of mans body, for it was taken out of them. If they were liable to changes & decays, his body must also have been liable to the same — for it could have no higher nature than the materials out of which it was made. That the elements of this world, & the h. body which was formed out of them were not in their own nature unchangeable & incapable of decay even in the state in which they were at first created, appears from hence, that in fact great & fatal changes did happen in them from the apostasy of man. We see at present every thing in this world fluctuating, changing, & tending to destruction. Every part of the world suffering by storms & earthquakes & inundations — the body of man suffering both

~~Doctor Jeekins~~
~~of Connecticut~~
~~[illegible]~~

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No III.

The Creation of Adam

Gen. II.7.

And ye Ld G formed man of the dust of the ground, & breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, & man became a living soul.

Right Revd Bishop of New Connectic

the life of Adam; but I rather ſuppoſe them to have been ſacramental — the one of them the ſymbol of death. And that Adams eating of it was a determination & declaration that he would ſeek his happineſs in his own way, by the gratification of his ſenſes like the ~~brute~~ irrational animals— The other viz: the tree of life to have been ſymbolical of health of body, & peace with G. And its uſe to have been to repair the decays of nature, & to have kept the ~~human~~. body in health & vigour, & also to have been the ſign & pledge of pardon, & peace with G upon any deviation from duty which might be unhappily incurred, thro' surprise or other infirmity. That such circumstances should happen, even in mans state of innocency, is not improbable. God, we are told, chargeth his Angels with folly. Those b. spts may, it seems, in some respects, deviate from, or, at least, come short of their strict duty — for in his sight nothing else is folly. Where then is ye absurdity of supposing that man, who in his best estate is lower than Angels, should be subject to such deviations from duty as they are — And how gracious was Gd to provide a remedy for them — even the sacrament of *the tree of Lf*: by which their

covenant with G was renewed
— their faith in Him strengthened
— their dependence acknowledged
— their hope in His mercy enlivened
— their sense of his goodness confirmed.

The other means of procuring immortality was the h. sp. of G. given to Adam as a supernatural gift, that under its influence he might obtain that supernatural bliss which G designed for him.

Tho this gift of the H. Sp. is not asserted by Moses in express terms, yet (it is) fairly implied in his account of the creation of man. What less can be infered from mans being made in the image of G? It cannot relate to the form of his body for G can have no bodily form. The H. Sp, tho distinct in person, is essential to the Godhead, so that where G is, there the Sp must be also — & therefore in whatever the image of G in Adam consisted it could not be without the H. Sp. And it appears that the

~~That Adam was created in holiness is allowed by all. But yre can be no holiness but from ye H. Sp. of G. & therefore the H. Sp. was given him at his creation.~~

This

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~~This appears also from that dominion over the other creatures which was conferred on Adam. The H. Sp. is the Ld from Heaven~~

The dominion over the other creatures, which was given to Adam, was in conſequence of the image of G in him, to which the preſence of the H. Sp. in him was abſolutely neceſsary, for, as I said before, where the Sp. of G is not, there the image of G cannot be.

~~[illegible]~~ Let us make man in our ~~[illegible]~~ own image, & let them have dominion ~~[illegible]~~

Besides: That Adam was created in holineſs, & with power to perſevere in holineſs, is allowed by all. Bec. there can be no holineſs in any creature but from the Sp of G; therefore the Sp must have been given to Adam at his creation, to be in him the governing principle of his life — the principle of holy obedience to his creator, on which all his hope of immortality depended. The means must be in proportion to the end; & if immortality was ſupernatural to Adam, i.e. what he could not attain by the mere energy of his rational nature, then he must have been endued with ſome ~~gifts~~ ~~or~~ powers that were ſupernatural; but such powers can only come fm the Sp of G.

If therefore, when G breathed into Adam the breath of lives, he received not only such a soul as made him a living animal, but ~~Bishop [illegible]~~ such a rational, intelligent soul as made him a rational animal, what should hinder but ~~that~~ at the same time he ~~New London~~ received such virtue & energy of the H. Sp of G as was ~~his~~ in him the principle of holiness, & of immortal bliss & glory. Without this he seems to have been incapable of obtaining that perfection & happiness for which his creator designed him.

That this was the belief of

the antient Jews & Xns might easily be shewn did the compass of a Sermon permit it.

Should any doubt remain it may probably be removed by the plainer declarations of the Xn Rev. in which the Sp of G is always acknowledged as the principle of holiness & immortality— nay our future resurrection to life & immortality ascribed to him {If ye Spt of him yt + raised up Xt &c} But why should the operation of the Sp be necessary to the immortality of man now, but because ~~that was~~ in the first state of his nature he was to receive a

supernatural immortality thro' fr
the energy of the same divine Sp.

Xty teaches us that eternal life
is the gift of God, & reason will tell
us that it always was & must be so.
No creature can be independent of its
creator, & therefore can hold neither
life nor happiness but as his gift.
Consequently the life of every ~~[illegible]~~
creature who is happy with G
must be in & by the operation & ~~[illegible]~~
agency of the Sp of G. Therefore is
our recovery of this d. N, as a principle of life, thro' Xt,
called our Regeneration, New birth,
New creation, because we regain
thro' Xt that presence, energy, in-
dwelling

dwelling, or life of the Sp.t of G, wch
the nature received when G breathed
into Adams nostrils the breath of
lives, & which we lost (as a prin-
ciple of life) by his apostacy. And
therefore does the Ss teach us, That
There is no other name &c: because
there can be no immortality for
us but thro' the operation of the
H. Sp; & having lost this Sp by ye
fall of Adam, we can recover it
no other way than thro' the me-
diation of J. Xt the S of G, from
whom ~~in~~ in unity with the
F the H. Sp proceedeth.

Nor be it remembred that the redemption by J. Xt is to regain that for h. nature which it lost by the Apostacy of Adam: The very words Redemption & restoration convey this idea. To be redeemed from any ſtate ſuppoſes some happier condition from which we had fallen — To be reſtored ſuppoſes us to have loſt ſome ſtate which by our restoration we are to recover. And I know no better way to aſcertain what we loſt in Adam, that to consider what what we gain by J. Xt. If by J we are to gain a reſurrection from the dead, we may be sure we lost our title to immortality, & became

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liable to death by our original apostacy— If we are to ~~receive~~ obtain the presence of the H. Sp., as the principle of our life, thro' the mediation of Xt, we may be sure we lost the H. Sp., as a principle of life, by the disobedience of Adam, & consequently, that by the state of our first creation that Sp. was communicated to us, & was intended to be the governing principle: the life of our life— the soul, if I may so express myself, of our soul— to keep man in constant depen-

Gen.l Huntington presents his Respects
to Bishop Seabury & requests the Honour
of his Company at Dinner tomorrow 2 Clock

Thursday Morning

dance on his creator, & lead him in his obedience to the will of G., to that immortality in heaven for which he was intended.

The root of many errors in Rel. seems to be fixed in a false notion of what the redemption of Xt is to do for us. Some have imagined that Xt by fulfilling the law in our nature, &, in y^{t} nature, dying as an atonement for sin, has not only obtained a complete remission for all sin y^{t} ever was or will be committed, has left nothing for us to do, but confidently to rely upon him; & that his obedience & suffering shall be so imputed to us, that we shall be esteemed as holy & innocent as tho' we never had sinned. ~~[illegible]~~

I trust I have as high a sense of Xts Redemption & merit as any man —I believe that there is no other name under heaven given to man, whereby he must be saved, but only the name of our Ld & Sav. J. Xt. I believe that without his redemption it would have been impossible for salvation to come to any one. At the same time, I must believe that those ps which make known to us ~~false~~ the glad tidings of Salvation thro' Xt are true, & to be depended on in what they say — I believe that when they declare repentance, faith, & holineſs to be neceſsary on our part to obtain immortality — heavenly happineſs thro' Xt, that they really mean what they say — & that without holineſs no man shall see the Lord — If so, then whoever leſsens the neceſsity of penitence & holineſs is unfriendly to Piety & to the souls of men. Xt has restored us to the hope of immortality, to the capacity of holineſs, thro' the operation of the H. Sp which he purchaſed for us, & ſent from heaven after his aſcenſion. Man is therefore reſtored to the hope of immortality which he had loſt; but ye immortality is to be ſecured ~~[illegible]~~ by obedience to G, by living in ho- ~~[illegible]~~ lineſs & virtue according to the precepts of the Goſpel, to ~~[illegible]~~ the doing of which he is enabled by the H. Sp S which he has received as the principle of his life. If he does believe & live as the Gl directs, the ſupernatural bliſs of heaven will be his portion — not on account of any merit in himself, nor in any thing he can do, but thro' the merit & mediation of J. Xt who has put this immortal life within his reach, & enabled him to obtain it. But as Adam, tho' immortality was before him & in his power to attain thro' the operation of the H. Sp which G breathed into him with his animal life & rational ſoul, yet fell fr. this hope, & forfeited this prospect of heavenly happineſs by sinning against G, ſo also may we fall from our hope, & loſe our prospect

of

heavenly bliss to which G has called us thro' Xt, if we continue obstinate in sin, & reject the motions & solicitations of Gs H Sp to repentance & holiness of life. God is the same yesterday, to day, & forever — unchangeable in his nature & pro ~~[illegible]~~ perties; — Eternal life, i.e. Immorta~~[illegible]~~lity in heaven is as much his gift now as ever it was: ~~[illegible]~~ and if he refused to confer it on Adam, whom he created in innocence & holiness, & to whom he gave his G. Sp to be the principle of a holy life, because he sinned against his expreſs command, where can be the injustice or impropriety of his refusing it to us, if we take part with Adam in continuing obstinate in that sin which he began? Or, to put this remark in other words, If Adam by his disobedience rendered himself incapable of a bleſsed immortality in heaven; why should not obstinate continuance in disobedience render us incapable of heavenly happineſs also? In what are we better than he? But Xt has redeemed us — from the penalty of Adams sin I confeſs, & his redemption consists in restoring us to the capacity

to

hope of eternal life, & to the capacity of receiving the H & B Sp of G as the principle of holineſs in us: But I know not that Xt has redeemed us from the penalty of our perſonal ſins, unleſs upon our repentance, & faith in his atonement — at least my best attention has not been able to find any ſuch promiſe or declaration in the Bbl, & beyond the Bble in religious matters I wish not to go. How far Gs mercy may extend beyond what he has revealed, I pretend not to know; nor do I preſume to ſet limits to it. What he has declared it is my duty to preach, & it is your duty, my friends, to attend to it. By rejecting my preaching, you hurt not me — take care you hurt not yourselves, & I am ſatiſfied. That every creature that can be happy with G in eternity will be ſo I firmly believe — take care that by your ſins & impenitency you bring no impoſsibility on yourselves — Conſider theſe things, & may G's grace & H Sp influence the moments of your reflection, & lead you to that holineſs of life, which thro' Xt will bring you to life everlasting —

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Psalm 19 - 14

Let the words of my mouth & the meditations of my heart be always acceptable in thy sight O LORD my strength & my redeemer —

Most of the psalms being the occasional compositions of King David, it is nothing extraodinary that they should relate principally to his own circumstances & should take their rise from accidents & events in which he himself was particularly concerned. The piety of his heart suffered him to pass over no prosperous circumstance without celebrating the goodness of his Cre

-ator & pouring forth the warmest expressions of gratitude; & his firm trust in the protection of the Al:m draws from him the most earnest supplications for help & assistance whenever adversity spread her vail of darkness over him. In either case the fervour of his devotions gave warmth & energy to his expressions; while the strength of his genius & fertility of his imagination afforded them all, that variety & harmony could give them.

But in the psalm before us, the Crown & Scepter are laid aside. The dignity of his station is disregarded, & while he celebrates the wonders of Creation Providence & Grace, he appears in that very posture in which all things must one day appear before their Maker —

The piety & devotion of this psalm are so natural, so easy to be understood, so adapted to the feelings & affections of the human heart, that it is impossible to read it with attention, without catching something of that same spirit by which it was indicted —

The holy King begins with celebrating the works of creation — The heavens declare the glory of G— & the Firmament sheweth his handy work — Day unto Day uttereth speech, & night unto night sheweth knowledge there is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. By the works of Creation he celebrates & magnifies the power & wisdom of his creator. They afford ample & perpetual instruction to the inhabitants of the earth. Their existence shew the power of G— their Order, Beauty & Use declare his wisdom. The constant vicissitude, the alternate returns of Day & Night, invigorating & refreshing the face of the earth, loudly speaks the goodness of him who ordained them & manifest his parental care of the children of men. The language of nature is universal: it is understood by all the world & wants no interpreter to explain it's meaning. In this language the works of Creation speak: their voice ~~is the voice~~ is the voice of reason & intelligible to all reasonable beings. From among these works the psalmist singles out one as a particular

MUTILATED IN ORIGINAL

instance of the power, wisdom & goodneſs of of his Creator: The Sun is the great animating spirit of the material World. He is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber & rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race - His going forth is from the end of end of the Heaven & his circuit unto the ends of it & there is nothing hid from the heat thereof ——— How constant, how unwearied is his course - how dreadful, how surprising his effect! Continually imparting light & life & invigorating heat to every corner of the earth!

"But how much soever we may find ourselves affected with the contemplation of the objects of the natural creation, if we shift it scene, & turn our attention to the

rational world, every wonder will be doubte
& the power Wisdom & Goodness of G. will
appear but as servants to the benignity
of his nature. The rational world is not
only the most noble in itself, but it hath
ever been the peculiar care of Divine Providence to preserve & adorne it— Even the
beauty & grandeur, the order & harmony
the light & splendor of the material creation must have been intended as objects
for the contemplation of some intelligent being or they answer no manner
of end. They are all vain & useless unless
there be some creature capable of perceiving them & of receiving Joy & Happiness
from them. ~~And such~~ And such a creature

is Man in this world & such are the Angels in the other World. In what particular manner the goodness of G- exertes itself towards the Angelic ~~them~~ we know not; we only know that they are blessed & happy according to the utmost extent of their capacities. But with regard to ourselves, every sense every minute gives us particular instances of his love & goodness towards us. Wherever we turn our eyes, wherever we direct our thoughts, they are still encountered with evident proofs of the divine benignity. Particularly the soul, the immortal spirit of Man, as it is the noblest work of G- in this world, so has it ever been the peculiar object of his care — The sun indeed knows his appointed course & has ever ~~fu~~ fulfilled the will of his Creator, by keeping invariably the path desinged for him. The sea still remains in its old bed & in its utmost rage & fury still obeys the command of its maker, Hitherto shalt thou come & no further. These indeed act under the force of necessity imposed upon them by their Maker. They have no will of their own to direct them. But reason & freedom inseperable from reason, have caused an amazing variety in the rational world. And Man the only creature capable of knowing his Creator & his duty, has been the only creature who has departed from it, forgetting both his Maker & ~~[illegible]~~ of himself — Robing G— of that obedience which was due to him & subjectecting himself to the elements of the world. For when he beheld the Sun & the Moon & the Starrs, instead of acknowlidging & praising the power & wisdom & goodness of G- he foolishly said these O Man are thy GODS & bowed himself in ~~obedience~~ obeisance before them.

But G- forsook not Man, though sunk in ignorance & superstition. He manifested himself unto him: He gave him a law to direct his will: He gave him instruction to inform his reason: He gave him precepts to teach him knowlidge, he gave him directions how to pursue his own happiness. This was a kind of new creation & calls as loudly for our gratitude & praise as any of the works of Nature

Here the grace of G- triumphed: here the power & mercy of G- exalted themselves in recovering mankind from the bondage of Ignorance, from the slavery of vice, & from the thraldom of Idolatry. The consideration of these things seem appear ~~th~~ to have warmed the heart of the holy Psalmist, & excited him to sing with rapture the triumphs of divine Grace — to exalt the power of infinite Love & to celebrate the excellency of the Law of G—. Passing therefore from the contemplation of the power of G— manifested in the works of creation, to the consideration of the mercy & love of G— so conspicuous in the works of Grace, his devotions again breaks out in the most exalted strains — The Law of the Ld. is perfect converting the soul — the testimony of the Ld is sure making wise the simple

To this divine law the Sinner owes the conversion of his soul from sin & vice.

To the light of G's word the simple is indebted for wisdom, the ignorant for instruction. Nay all the pleasures of life, all the substantial comforts we enjoy, all the happiness we we hope for in heaven flow from the same ever living spring. The statutes of Ld. rejoice the heart as well as delight the eyes — They point out the misery of iniquity & teach us to avoid it — they set before us the most rational happiness that this world affords & the everlasting joys of heaven & teach us how to obtain them: For in keeping them there is great reward —

But while we thus adore G — for his Mercies, is it possible we can help making one reflection which most nearly concerns us? Can we forget how very undeserved these are? G- indeed has fenced us in with commandments that are pure, with a law that is perfect, with judgements that are true & ~~ri~~ righteous; but our own weakness is perpetually betraying us into error: our own folly or wickedness driving us into sins more in number than we can or care to remember

The justness of this reflection seems to have struck the psalmist, & while his heart glowed with a sense of G's undeserved & unbounded mercies it forced from him this heavy complaint — Who can understand his errors? The complaint is most naturally succeeded by an earnest petition for pardon & protection. For while the heart contemplates the power & goodness of G— while it feels its own weakness & misery it easily melts into sorrow

& devotion lamenting the wretchedness it feels & imploring the help that it wants from the hand who alone is able to save & to redeem — *O cleanse thou me from my secret faults!* He calls not his sins secret, with a design to extenuate them as though it were doubtful whether they were sins or not, but because their number exceeded the power of his memory & many of them were forgotten & unknown even to himself, but though they were secret to him, he knew they were noted by his G— & therefore begs that they might not rise up in judgement against him —

But though our sins be more in number than the hairs of our head, yet some of them stand marked by a more uncommon degree of guilt than others & will always present themselves to our Minds when we approach the throne of Grace. These we should particularly lament, against these we should particularly pray - when we apply to G - for strength & assistance & in this strain the Holy Psalmist continues his devotion Keep thy servant also from presumptuous sins &c

Having extolled the power & goodness of his creator, having humbled himself under the sense of the number & heinousness of his iniquities he closes this scene of praise & devotion in the words of the text Let the words of my mouth &c

Thus B B. I have endeavoured to open to you the scheme of thought which runs through this excellent pattern of prayer & Devotion, in hopes that it would in some degree raise & warm the affections of your own hearts

It is a subject which speaks for itself; & a prayer or song of praise composed in the true sp. of devotion, is not only a great incitement, but the best direction for the due performance of those duties. A Mans heart must be as cold as marble, who can read or hear the songs of holy joy & rapture with which the saints of old gave praise to their creator, & not feel something of the same spirit of joy & gratitude rise up in his own breast — or who can go through a prayer wh. laments the guilt of sin, which confesses the weakness of nature, which pours forth the cries of an afflicted penitent soul for mercy & pardon, without sending forth the strongest wishes of his heart to attend those cries for mercy & pardon which stands so much in need of himself.

May this be the effect which it has upon all who are now present, so that present comfort & consolation & eternal peace & happiness may be their portion through J Xt our Redeemer —

In this mornings discourse I employed myself in opening & expounding the psalm from whence the text is taken

This was necessary to a right understanding of the text & I hope not without its use and benefit to you — A scene of misery drawn by a poets pen or the pencil of a Painter has often power enough to move the pity of a compassionate heart. We feel ourselves allied to the sufferings of our fellow creatures — And shall we without emotion see the miseries of a soul afflicted for sin? Or shall we hear the ardent prayers which in bitterness of heart are poured forth before G— for pardon & mercy? Or shall we behold tears which flow from the pangs of a wounded sp. without being ~~to~~ moved thereby — No my friends, these tears, these cries which we have seen proceed from the full heart of pious David should be ours, for the cause is our ~~[illegible]~~ whence they proceed —

The same reason is there for our joining in those songs of praise which the Saints used to pay as instances of their gratitude for the mercies of G — His mercies are dispensed with an eaqual hand — We enjoy the same blessings of Creation & Providence ~~wh~~ which they did — & we ought to entertain the same greatful sense of them & to offer up the same incense of praise & thanksgiving for them — Consider in how exalted a strain this psalm of Davids is penned, how nobly the song is raised from circumstances which at once shew forth the beauty the Majesty, the mercy of the Almighty÷ & yet there is no act of providence mentioned, no instance of grace recorded in which you b. b. are not as deeply interested & as much in duty bound to be thankful for, as David himself —— The works of creation are still the same they were in the thi time of David — The heavens still declare the glory of G— Day & night still obedient to their makers law walk the same unwearied round — But with regard to the works of Grace the advantage is evidently on our side. For though the material sun be still the same, yet since the time of David the Sun of righteousness hath arisen & hath shed forth his choicest blessings on the inhabitantants of the Earth. The glories of the Messiahs reign, the happiness of his reign were things seen at a distance by the Ltt Saints of old, & yet they filled their mouths with praise & adoration

Shall we then be silent who enjoy the fulness of these mercies, to whom the Saviour of the world hath opened the richest treasure of G- love? David speaks with rapture of the law of G- as being more desireable than the finest gold & yet he lived under the heavy yoke of the Mosaich law- Had he seen the days of the Gospel, had he tasted the righteousness of this new law published by the son of G— I am unable to conceive in what strains of holy eloquence he would have expressed his joy

With what a noble resignation of soul, with what firm trust in G's mercy & goodness, does he apply for the forgiveness of his past offences & for strength to persevere in time come —

I have dwelt the longer bb, on this subject that I might have an opportunity to bring before you in the fullest manner, a contrast of the Piety of the present day — & that which warmed the heart of holy David — David as I before observed, had not the same encouragements to them duties that we have — He had never heard the that blessed invitation to repentance which is daily held forth to us — Come unto me all &c

He had never received those express promises of grace & spiritual assistance which have been confirmed to us. We have therefore every occasion, every inducement to join in the most exalted forms of prayer & praise to G— As our theme is exalted so should our praise be likewise, while we acknowledge & adore the giver of every good & perfect gift. We need not be afraid of exceeding on this occasion. Let the tide of our joy flow ever so full, it cannot swell beyond the dignity of our subject. Our praises at best are but a poor tribute for what we receive, our prayers of no value in comparison with what we ask & even our prayers & praises have their imperfections when performed in the best manner ~~[illegible]~~ we are able— So that

were we not in the hands of a merciful G—
who is not extreem to mark what is done ~~a~~
amiss we should not dare open our mouths
before him — This reflection in all probabili
ty led the psalmist into ~~that~~ the petition
contained in the text Let the words of &c

Reflect a little bb. on the psalmist conduct
on this occasion & see whether it will not teach
you both devotion & humility — He had been
praising G— for his goodness, he had been cele
brating the power & Majesty of his Creator, he
had been lamenting his own guilt & begging
protection & assistance against the snares &
allurements of Sin — but what were his prayers
& praises to G—? What valuable sacrafice could
dust & ~~ases~~ ashes offer up to the Almighty?

struck with this idea he stirs not from the spot till he had first begged pardon for the poorness of his sacrifice & had intreated the acceptance of such a ~~tribute~~ tribute as he could pay—

Is not this now an example worthy of our imitation? If we consider with what coldness & inattention we offer up our prayers & praises; how negligent we are in the service of G— how our thoughts wander, how our hearts are ingaged in the pursuit of idle vain conceits or of worldly cares, can we without presumption desire G— to receive such devotions & to accept the meditations of such ~~an~~ idle roving hearts— If such devotions as this pious prince offered, up, needed an excuse, what must become of ours— for without injuring

Prov: 1. 7.

The Fear of the Lord is the Beginning of Knowledge
but Fools deſpiſe Wisdom & Instruction.

This Maxim is the Reſult of the wise Man's Reflec=
=tions, upon the Value of Wisdom, & of the Experience he
had of the Conduct of Men with Regard to that great Object.—
Convinced as he was, of the Vanity of all worldly things,
he wished for ſomething better ſuited to a reaſonable, and
immortal Soul. — The Search after Truth, the Study
of Wisdom, was the only thing that ſeemed worthy of his
Care, & Attention. — To cultivate his Reason, to correct
his Heart, & improve his Mind, this was the Task this
illustrious Penitent imposed upon himſelf. — And,
while he was engaged in these Reflections, he could not
help being ſtruck, with the Errors of those, who ob=
=ſerved a different Conduct; He could not look out, into
the ○ without taking Notice of the vast Number of

Partiſans of Error & Vice, whom he always brands with the name of Fools. — a Diſtinction they well deſerve; who departing from the Rules of Conduct, which right Reaſon & Religion have preſcribed, chuse to follow their own Devices. — The Wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way; but the Folly of Fools is Deceit. — The Wisdom here recommended, & that alone which is worth our Attention, is what relates to the moral Conduct & Government of our Lives. — a Science which as it is neceſsary, ſo it is within the Reach of all who diligently ſeek it. — I mean that Wisdom wh: is inſeparably connected with the Knowledge & Practice of true Religion. — And it may be observed once for all, that this is the only Virtue, which is distinguished by the name of Wisdom, in the Scriptures both of the old & new Testament. — All that worldly Cunning or Craft, whereby ſome men perſue their Ends, exclusively of the ſound Principles of Faith & Virtue are generally ſtigmatized with the name of Folly. — accordingly the one of these is ſometimes ſtyled

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The Wisdom that is from above, & the Wisdom of God, to ſhew its original & Deſcent: whereas in Oppoſition to this the other is called the Wisdom from beneath, or which de=ſcendeth not from above, which is earthly, ſenſual, Devilish & again the Wisdom of the Fleſh which is Enmity againſt God. – However this last was all the Wisdom the ancient heathen Philoſophers had to boast of; & ſo it is of their Succeſsors the Moderns; I mean such as of those Freethinkers, who are for advancing a kind of wisdom Philoſophy to the Prejudice & Excluſion of the Principles of Religion. – There is a ſort of ſelf-Conceit & Vanity, which generally distinguishes the Characters of ſuch Pretenders to knowledge Science, who frequently impoſe upon themſelves & deceive others, by affected & false Reaſonings & Arguments; a kind of Sophistry which can never ſtand the Test of Right Reaſon. – We can never be too well guarded, against the crafty Inſinuations of ſuch De=ceivers, who are always aſsiduous to gain Proſelytes to their Errors; & who are ever ſetting up their own Inventi=ons, in

The Wisdom that is from above, the Wisdom of God, so
from its Original & Descent: whereas in Opposition to this
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their Errors; & who are ever setting up their own favour=
=ite

in Oppoſition to the Word of God. — A very prepoſterous Study! thus, to endeavour to deface the divine Image in their Souls, & withdraw themſelves & others as far as poſſible from the Paths of Happineſs. — The univerſal Disorder which prevailed in the Time of the wiſe Author of the Text, occaſioned him to make ſo many Reflections upon the Folly of thoſe, who run into ſuch ſelf-Deceptions, whereby they became deaf to the Voice of right Reaſon, & the Admonitions of ſound Wisdom. — *The Folly of Fools is Deceit.* — To vindicate the Providence of God, in regard to this ſcandalous Abuse of his Diſpenſation, the wiſe Man in another Book, takes Care to fix the Blame, where it ought to be fixed, Viz: upon the Self-Sufficiency & Pride of thoſe, who chuſe rather to follow Systems of a Religion of their own contriving, than to ſubmit to thoſe Rules of Conduct which the divine Wisdom hath preſcribed. *Lo! this only have I found, that God hath made Man upright; but they have ſought out*

many

many Inventions (Ecc: 7.29) This is one of those Maxim the Truth of which, to the Shame of Mankind, hath ap=peared in all Times, & in most Places. — What Climate? What Country? What City is there? where Error hath not ſhed its baneful Influence? What Age hath not ſeen Man debaſe himſelf below the Excellence of his Nature & impoſe the most venerable Names upon the most fri=volous Conceits, & wickedest Inventions? — It would be happy for this Age, if amongst the Advantages which distinguish it in ſo many Respects from others, it might reckon, the undisturbed Empire of Reason & Religion for one; happy if Wiſdom could find as many true Disci=ples, as there are Men, who put in their Claim to that Honōr! inſtead of this, *I am afraid the present Age*; will it may be more truly represented by the Portrait which the Prophet Jeremy hath given us of his own Times: *Be aſtoniſhed O ye Heavens! at this, & be horribly afraid! — for my People hath committed two Evils; they have forſaken*

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me the Fountain of living Waters, & hewed them out Ciſterns, broken Ciſterns that can hold no Water. (Jer. 2. 1) —

The Case was the ſame at the Time, when the Goſpel was publiſhed, or even worſe. — ſee the first Chap. of the Epis. to the Rom. — The Apostle in this Chap. reflects upon the Errors of Paganism. — One cannot without Horror read the Deſcription he there gives of the Θ — One ſees a most brutal Ignorance, a groſs Depravation prevail in the Nations, which treated others as Barbarians. — *Greece & Italy equalled or exceeded in Corruption*, the People *they insulted over.* — Under a more civilized Behaviour their Manners were no leſs impure, nor their Notions leſs extravagant. — But the Cenſure of St. Paul, falls particularly upon those who were called *knowing* or *Philoſopers*. — The Search of Truth, the Discovery of the Secrets of Nature, the Study of the ſupreme Being, might one would think, have procured them the name of *wiſe* Men. — *The People favored these* Pretensions

Nortons drops

℞. Aq. Roſar. ℥iv. Coccinel. pulv. gr. vj
trajice per filtrum, dein ſolve Mer-
cur. corroſ. ſublimat gr. xxiij. Int.
Sal. marin. gr. ij. M. — Cap. gtt viij
vel x bis in die in part. equal.
Lact. et Aq. vel Thea ex Legno Saſſa-
fras.

A Teaspoonful of the Tubes of Leeks dried in an Oven & powdered in a glass of White Wine Night & Morning a good remedy in the Gravel

Pretenſions, by that Love of Novelty, which generally gains their Attention to the last Comer. — This Succeſs increaſed the Number of the Followers or Profeſsors of Philoſophy. — Every Disciple was a Pretender to Wisdom. — The Sects multiplied. — The Profeſsion of Wisdom was comon to them all. — But the Apostle would not allow their Pretenſions; whatever they might think of themſelves, he declares that he had a very different Opinion of them. Becauſe when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their Imaginations & their fooliſh Heart was darkned. profeſsing themſelves to be wise they became Fools. (Rom 1. 21:22) — — This Character of them is fully justified, by the History we have of the Philoſophy of those Times: the various & contrary Systems, the Atheism of ſome the Idolatry of others, & the Vices & Corruption of all of them, ſhew that it is just in its whole Extent. — And it was well if it might ſtop there; but the Pretenders

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to Wisdom are in all Ages the ſame. — The ſame Self-conceit, Vanity & Folly are ſtill the distinguiſhing Characteriſticks, of those who would fain ſet up Syſtems, of their own deviſing, in Oppoſition to the Word of God. — But there can be no Difficulty in ſhewing the Weakneſs & Folly of their Pretenſions. — The fallacy of their best Arguments, is discoverd at once, when brot to Light & expoſed in a just Point of View. — When the Mask is once plucked off, from Impiety, no more need be done to ſhew the Folly & Deformity of it. — The Authors & Advocates of Irreligion, whatever they may pretend, are the Enemies of Mankind, & their own Enemies too. — *Folly & Destruction are in their Ways, & the Way of Peace have they not known*. — — But it is our Happineſs that we have (better Teachers, & a better) Rule of Condu traced out for us. — The ſupreme Wisdom, hath directed us in the Way we ought to follow, in order to be happy. It teacheth us to cultivate our Reaſon & to ſtud

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that divine Revelation, which the H. Spirit exhibiteth as *a Lantern unto our Feet & a Light unto our Paths*.— Yield to the Instructions of this heavenly Wisdom, & you will reap the Fruits of it, in the Peace & Tranquility of your Minds.— *Hear Instruction & be wiſe & refuſe it not*.— For whoſo findeth this heavenly Wisdom, *findeth Life, & ſhall obtain Favor of the Lord* (Prov: 8:35)— In the Purſuit & Fruition of Wisdom, there is the trueſt & ſincereſt Pleasure.— It fills the Heart with Joy, & the Conſcience with Peace.— *Her Ways are Ways of Pleaſantneſs, & all her Paths are Peace* (Prov: 3:17)— It is no eaſy Matter to deſcribe, what Satisfaction & Pleaſure it is to enjoy the Preeminence of Wisdom; & to look down upon the Follies, the Errors & Wanderings of those, who walk in the Vale below.—— From the Nature of Wisdom it is impoſsible that any wicked Man can be truly wiſe.— Becauſe ſuch men mistak in their main End; they prefer Earth before Heaven

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the tranſient, momentary Enjoyments of the present Time, before those of Eternity; & herein conſisteth, their monſtrous Folly. — And this Mistake with Regard to the main End, is attended by other Mistakes, in Regard to the Means. — Such Persons are apt to proceed by indirect & dishonest Means; & herein conſists their Wickedneſs. — Whatever Quickneſs (*& Vivacity*) of Parts, they may be naturally endued with, yet are they very far from being Wiſe. — For they cannot discern *betwixt things that differ, nor are able to approve those that are more excellent.* — They may have a great Share of Knowledge *& Learning,* & yet fall far ſhort of Wisdom. — *Athens* & *Corinth*, were very high in Reputation for their Knowledge: & yet the Apostle reckons them no better than Fools (1 Cor: 1:20) *Where is the Wiſe? Where is the Scribe? Where is the Disputer of this O?* — And again in the Text above cited ſpeaking of the Grecian Philoſophers, he ſays, *Whilst they profeſsed*

them

themselves to be wise they became Fools. — Men may be well verſed in the Scriptures, as the jewish Doctors were, & yet as long as they only make a perverſe Use of their Knowledge, deſerve no better Name than what our Bleſſed Saviour beſtowed on them (Matt: 23:17) Ye Fools & Blind! — They may have the Art & Skill of bringing about their Secular-Deſigns, & become rich & great in the O, by their political Cunning & management, & yet fall under the ſame Cenſure. — You know the Reproof of our Saviōr to the rich Man in the Gospel, who by his Industry & Skill, had procured large Stores & Treasures to himself. (Luk: 12.20) Thou Fool! this Night thy Soul ſhall be required of thee; then whoſe ſhall those things be which thou hast provided? To conclude then,

From all that has been ſaid this is the Reſult: Virtue & Holineſs is the truest Wisdom; & he who is truly religious, (whatever his other Accomplishments or Defects may be) is truly Wiſe. — Behold the Fear

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of the Lord, that is Wisdom, & to depart from Evil, is Understanding (Job 28. 28) – The good Man is in the Language of Scripture, & in the Estimation of God, the only wise Man; & the Conversion of a Sinner is there called the being *turned to the Wisdom of the Just* (Luke 1:17) – On the other Side all kind of Sin, is called by the Name of *Folly*. – Whatever accomplishments or Talents, a Person may be endued with, if he hath not this divine Prudence, or Wisdom he will be found light, when he comes to be wighed in the Ballce. of the Sanctuary. – – Let us then heartily embrace the *Xtian Faith* which is *Wisdom unto Salvation*. – For this leads us unto a practical Acquaintance, with the Doctrine of our Lord J: Xt, *in whom are laid up all the Treasures of Wisdom & Knowlidge*. (Col: 2.3) – – It is but Refuse, the Husks of Knowlidge that is to be obtained elsewhere. —

Whatever Skill or Dexterity a Man may acquire in worldly Concerns, yet He will be no better than

Fool if he be ignorant in the important Concern
his Soul. – And therefore if we aim at true Wisdom
we ſhould make it our chief Buſineſs, to grow in grac
in the Knowledge of our Lord Jesus Xt.

St. Paul was both a Man of Parts & a Scholar; having been bred up at the Feet of Gamaliel; yet he profeſses that all his other Acquirements, were Nothing in Comparison of his Xtian Knowledge – Thus (Phillip: 3.8) he ſays, He counts all things but Loſs for the Excellency of the Knowledge of Xt Jesus our Lord.

May this divine Knowledge enlighten our Min
& ſo conduce to the Salvation of our Souls, thro' th
ſame Jesus Xt. To whom &ca

For we know in part.

st Knowledge that can be acquired in
very imperfect, it is but in part. — Reaſon
as it is by the Clouds of Prejudice & Paſsion
clearly point out to man; either his firſt Be-
ing or his laſt End. — Religion co[illegible]n to our
Aid; it draws aſide the fatal Veil which hindered us
from perceiving the moſt intereſting T[illegible]
Light diſſipates the Ignorance we naturally labour
under, in regard to the things of God, & the concernments
of Futurity. — Yet this Light is ſtill mixed with
Darkneſs. — The Goſpel which diſcovers to us enough
for our Direction & neceſsary Uſe, doth not pretend to
ſatisfy our Curioſity [illegible] the greedy Deſire of Know-
ledge, which would carry us to pry into the Secrets
of Nature. — The perfect Knowledge of all Truth
& the full Solution of all Doubts is reſerved [illegible]

another Diſpenſation. — Tis only in Heaven which is the proper Region of Light, that we ſhall be really transformed into the *ſame Image with our Lord*, when *we ſhall behold his Face in Righteouſneſs*. (2 Cor. 3:18)

But as long as we are in this O, the Advances we can make, even by the help of Religion in the Knowledge of Truth, are always interrupted, & cut ſhort by the Imperfection of the present Diſpensation. — As long as our Soul is confined to this earthly Tabernacle which clogs & retards all its Flights, it may be always ſaid that *we know only in Part*. — a Consideration this noleſs mortifying to human Pride, than it is uſeful for the ſtrengthning & confirming of the Xtian Faith. — It is for the Glory of Religion, to contemplate the Obſcurity & Imperfection of our natural Knowledge. — When we ſpeak as Xtians, of the Vanity of human Science & the Imperfection of our best Acquirements it is

with

with a View to magnify the Wiſdom of that which which is more perfect & to vindicate it from the Im=putation of *the unlearned & unſtable* (2 Pet: 3:16)–

The Fact itſelf is pretty clear; all Men muſt be convinced of the Uncertainty & Imperfection of human Knowledge.— To ſay nothing of the knotty Queſtions of Philoſophy, nor of the Difficulties that attend every Art & Science; we ſhall confine our Reflections to thoſe Objects which have ſome Relation to the more intereſting Buſineſs of Religion.—and here if man depends only, upon the Strength of his natural Powers, he will make no great Progreſs in his Reſearches of Truth.— At every Step he takes, he meets with ſome unſurmountable Obſtacle.— The Order & Beauty of the Univerſe points out to him a God, the Creator & Adorner of ſo ſtately a Fabric.— He cannot behold the Face of Heaven without being ſtruck with the Perfecti

of

of him who made it, & who hath with ſuch admirable Skill adjuſted the various motions of the ſeveral Bodies which compoſe it. — But when he would go farther, & attempts to fathom the Nature of the Supreme Being, whom he adores, he finds himſelf at a Loſs, being no longer conducted by the Pillar of Fire. — He is bewildered in the various Doubts that ariſe in his Mind. — there is no Room indeed to doubt of the Existence, the eternal & neceſsary Exiſtence of a firſt Cauſe, ſince without admitting this Principle, the ☉ would be an inexplicable Riddle. — And the ſame monuments which diſcover the Exiſtence of the Creator, ſerve also to diſcover his Providence. — 'Tis a neceſsary Conſequence, that ſince the Univerſe ſubſiſts with the ſame Harmony, it owes its Preſervation to the ſame attributes, to which it owes its Birth. — This is a new Object for the Speculations of a reaſonable Creature; But is there no Difficulty in it? — Can Reaſon re=

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reconcile the Wiſdom of Him, who holdeth the Reins of the O. with certain Appearances, the Deſign of wh it doth not underſtand, & the ſad Conſequences of which it feels? What will it think of the Goodneſs of the Sovereign Lord, who ſuffereth ſuch enormous Outrages to diſfigure the Earth, or of the Iustice of the ſupreme Legislator, which permits ſucceſsfull Vilainy to raise its Head & ride in Triumph, while diſtrest Innocence is chained to its Car. Alaſs! human Reason is weak in its Powers, & uncertain in its Concluſions, little able to ſolve these & the like Difficulties, or to conſole & quiet the Agitations of the Mind. — I ſpeak of bare unaſsisted Reaſon.--

If we take in the aſsistance of Revelation, it is thereby enabled to rise much higher. — No one can deny the Superiority of the Xtian System above that of Nature the Gospel is the Sun which enlightens the Eyes of our Underſtanding & thereby

discovers

discovers to us, ſuch things as Eye hath not ſeen; nor Ear heard, neither have entered into the Heart of Man to conceive (1 Cor: 2:9) – ~~But~~ But doth even this Sun ſhine without Clouds? are not theſe *deep things of God*, the Objects rather of our *Faith*, than of our *Knowledge*? – In drawing aſide the Vail, which hideth the Future from our Eyes, to fix them upon the Inheritance of the Saints in light, (Col: 1:2.) doth Religion determine the preciſe Senſe & Meaning of the Images & Figures, which are made uſe of to repreſent to us the Enjoyments of Heaven? – Doth it give us clear Ideas of the *Crowns*, *Thrones*, *Feasts*, & *Rivers of Pleaſure* which are the promiſed Rewards of Piety? – We may carry our Speculations even to the moſt ſublime Truths & Myſteries; we may invincibly eſtabliſh the Faith of the H. Trinity, the Incarnation of the Word, the perfect Satiſfaction made by the Blood of Jesus Xt. to the divine Justice, & the Neceſſity of Grace

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in the Converſion of Man: — But after having proved the Doctrine, how far are we from giving compleat Ideas of theſe things? Who will clear up all the Obſcurities which ſtill attend our Meditations, on the divine Nature? *Canst thou by ſearching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty to Perfection? it is as high as Heaven what canst thou do? deeper than Hell, what canst thou know?* (Job 11: 7.8) — — above all the myſtery of the Redemption; the doctrine of the Son of God dying, as a Sacrifice for Sin; this is an impenetrable Depth. — How indeed ſhould we penetrate those things, which even the Angels deſire to look into, but cannot fully comprehend. (1 Pet. 1: 12.) — And as for the heavenly Operations of the divine Grace, which opened the Hearts of the first Disciples so that they attended to the Words of the Apostles, & which ſtill effectually worketh in all true Believers, that divine Fire which purifying our Souls from carnal Lusts, kindles in them that Love which is more powerfull than

Death

Death & the Grave. -- Who can expreſs the myſterious Ways, whereby its inviſible Operations are produced; *turning the Hearts of Men as the Rivers of Waters*, without deſtroying the Faculties of human Nature? *The Wind bloweth where it liſteth, & thou hearest the Sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, & whither it goeth; ſo is every one that is born of the Spirit.* — These things exceed our Comprehenſion. — The Fact is plain nor is it difficult to aſsign the Causes of it: our Powers & Faculties which are well enough ſuited to our well-being in this ⊙, will fail us when we apply them towards Objects which are either too large or too remote. — Our Reason is limited in its Operations, & advances only Step by Step in the Diſcoveries it makes. — It cannot in an Instant unravel a long chain of Propoſitions. — And whatever borders upon Infinity is above its Reach. — There are indeed a Multitude of Subjects, which exceed the human Capacity — But we are ſpeaking only of those of Religion. —

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This turns entirely upon the Nature, the Attributes & the Deſigns of the infinite Being. — In order to know certain Mysteries, ſuch as the Doctrine of the Trinity & the like, it would be neceſsary to fathom the Nature of God. — For ſuch a compleat Knowledge would ſuppoſe Faculties proportioned to the infinite Eſsence. — But no ſuch Faculties are to be found but in the infinite Being; they are peculiar to God, nor can be communicated — No Man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father. (Luke 10:22) What Man knoweth the things of Man, ſave the Spirit of Man which is in him? even ſo the things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God (1 Cor. 2:11.) In ſhort, the vast Difference there is between this ⊖ & the next, is the grand Source of our Ignorance. — We are placed here in a State of Trial & Probation. — The divine Wisdom hath reſerved the Secrets of his Providence, for the other ⊖. when the Lord will bring to Light the hidden things of Darkneſs (1 Cor. 4:5) — As long as we continue in this

earthly

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Soul

Soul & the Body are both imperfect in their Union here— They will be adorned with new Talents, by the new Union which the Lord will make of them, according to the Pattern of his own Glory. — For we know in Part, but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in Part, ſhall be done away. — For now we ſee thro' a Glaſs darkly but then Face to Face. — Now I know in Part, but then, ſhall I know even as also I am known. — To conclude.

From hence we may learn to ſet a just Value upon our Xtian Hope; & to enjoy the unſpeakable Delights with which the Expectation of the future State fills the faithful Heart, in the midst of the hardest Sufferings of the present Time— How great is the Prospect to a mortal Man, to know that he ſhall ſoon ſee his abject Condition, changed into a glorious & permanent Condition! how conſoling to think that after having been humbled under a Senſe of his Ignorance, & Darkneſs, the Truth ſhall fully be manifeſted to him in all its Brightneſs! how comfortable to be aſsured,

that

that Death which advances with hasty Steps, when it ſhall have cruſhed to Pieces, this batterd Cottage of the Soul, will only open a Paſsage for its Inhabitant, into a new Life, a Life of Happineſs & Perfection! how delightful! to find himſelf in the midst of the Ruins of the Universe ſafe, upon the Rock of Ages, ſo that he can with Confidence ſay, I know whom I have believed; & am perſwaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him, against that Day (2 Tim: 1.12) - - Then let us all aſpire after that glorious Eternity, where our Treaſure is.— Let us by frequent exercise of Faith draw near to that happy Period.— Let us accustom our Hearts to entertain a Deſire of those Good things which are very different from what the O calls by that Name.— Not but that we may ſo long as we are upon Earth enjoy, with Thankfulneſs, the Effects of the divine Bounty.— But it must be in Subordination to the Things of Heaven.— These ought to have the first Place, in our Affections & to be purſued

with

with the conſtant Bent of our Souls. — There is only one Object, that ought to engage all our Deſires & all our Sacrifices. — God alone demands the whole Heart as his due. — He ſolicits & invites us in the most tender & engaging Manner to devote ourſelves to him. — Nay he hath purchased & redeemed us, by that which was most precious, & valuable to Him. — By a Miracle of Love, he hath made us his own. — *For God ſo loved the ⊙ that He gave his only begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth in him, ſhould not periſh but have everlaſting Life* (Jno 3:16)

That we may all be Partakers of the Same, God &cā

Sp^{t}. Sal. ammon. volat. ℥4. Cocinill gr xij. digere pro Dieb. 5. cola

Jesuits Eye Water

R. Bay salt. White Vitriol āā ℥j — Double refined Sugar ℥ij. Spring Water two quarts. digest 24. shaking them frequently. One drop to be put into the Corner of the Eye at going to bed.

Conserve of damask Roses, is an approved Remedy for sharp humours in the Eyes & blindness from the small pox, applied on a piece of Linnen and renewed every day: the Eye to be washed with the Water collected on a Pewter plate from the Steam of a boiling Tea kettle. —

Nostrums

[illegible]

[illegible] — And therefore if we came at true Wisdom

we should make it our chiefest business to grow in

[illegible] in the Knowledge of our Lord Jesus Ch.

St Paul was both a man of Parts & a Scholar, hav-

ing been bred up at the Feet of Gamaliel, yet he

[illegible] that all his other Acquirements were Nothing

in comparison of his Divine Knowledge. — Phi-

lip. 3.8 he says [illegible]

the Excellency of the Knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord

[illegible]

to endure to the [illegible] of our souls, then [illegible]

[illegible]

J

Juan

J

Genuine Receipt for Turlingtons
Balsam

℞. Bals. peruv. ℥ij. G. ~~My~~ Styrac. ℥iv. e ℥ij
Benzoin. opt. ℥vj. Aloes succotrin.
G. Thuris elect. G. Myrrh. Rad.
Angelic. recen. Flor. Hyperic. aa ℥j
Spt Vin. rectificat. ℔ij. digere &c
B. M. ——

Tooth powder by Mr Brandenburgh
the Kings Apothecary, & which his
late Majesty always used

℞. Cryst. Montan. (vel crem tart) Corral. rubr. ppt
Sang. Dracon opt. aa ℥ij. Pulv.
Myrrh. ℥j. Pulv. Lateri. subtiliss. ppt
℥j. Ol. Rhod. gtt iv. M.

For an ague, to be given at the accessof
the Fit, & repeated pro re nata

℞. Fol. Lauriced pulv. No xij. Grain Piper Nig.
No xij. Vin. Gallic. Cyath. ij M.

For a ſcalled Head

℞. Mercur. ſublimat. corroſ. gr xxiv Aq.
Phaſeallis ℔ij. M. f. Lotio.

Genuine Receipt for Dr Anderſons or the Scotch Pills

℞. Aloes Succotrin ℔ß. Sem. Anis. Coriandri. Foenicul. dulc. Petroſelin.
Bardanae aa ℥ß. Miſce, fiat Pulv.
craſs. coq: leni Igni in Spt. Vin.
Gallic. ℔iij. ad ℔ißs. in Vaſe terren.
vitreato; Expreſſion. forti coletur.
adde Cremoris tartari ℥j. Croci
anglic. pulv. Flor. ſulph. aa ℥ß.
coq: ſimul leni Igni ſemper agitando ad Conſiſtentiam ſucci Liquoritiae Hyſpan. de qua formentur
Pilul. mediocres. —

For an Asthma — Dr Pringle

Rx. Lact. Ammoniaci ℥vß. Oxymel.
Scillit. M. f. mist. — Coch. ij
Sexta. quaq.$_{3}$ hora.

Scalled Head

Rx. Olive Oil brought to the Consistence
of an Ointment with the Ashes of
Tobacco; rub a little over the head
night & morning, and cover it with
a ~~wilted~~ Cabbage leaf.

For a Flux.

Rx. Tinct. Styptic. Eaton. gtt L. in
Cyath. Vin. rub. Gallic omni ~~nt~~
Nocte & Mane.

Horsebeans roasted as Coffee, and
given in powder, have a happy
Effect in Diarrhoeas.

No Dr Cheseldens ſecret for the
Cure of the Stone and gravel —

Rx. One Tea ſpoonfull of the ſtrongest Soap Ley, mix it with four Table ſpoons full of ſweet milk, take it an hour before breakfast & at Bed time, drinking ſome milk before & after. If it agrees with the Stomach in three or four days take half a teaſpoonfull more.

For the Piles —

Rx. Aſhes of burnt Corks ℥i. Ungt. Sambucin, vel Popul. ℥ß. anoint the Piles —

R Leaves of broad Plantain ſprinkled with wheat Flower, to be applied to old Ulcers. —

p

Jesuits Drops

℞. Castile Soap. p. j. — Bals. Tolu — Balm Gilead — Guaiacum āā p. ij — Salt Tart. p. j. — Bals. Copaiv. p. ij. — Oil of Sassafras a smale quantity. Spt. Vin. 4 times the Quantity of the whole. Digest 6 Days frequently shaking

---

Fern root an admirable vermifuge

For old obstinate Ulcers —

Boil a handful of English Walnut Leaves with a Spoonful of brown Sugar for 8 or 10 minutes, strain it and moderately warm dip a Pledget into it & apply it to the Ulcer; to be renewed every third day.

Ess. Volatil —

℞. Spt. Vin. rectificat. ℔ ij. Alum. rup. ℥ ij. Camph. ʒ 4. Ess. Limon. ʒ ß

Sp.

Sp^t. Sal. ammon. volat. ℥4. Cocinill gr xij. diger. pro Dieb. 5. cola.

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Nostrus

Nortons drops

℞. Aq. Rosar. ℥iv. Coccinel. pulv. gr. vj transice per filtrum, dein solve Mercur. corros. sublimat gr. xxxij. Spt. Sal. marin. gtt j. M. — Cap. gtt viij vel x bis in die in part. equal. Latt. et Aq. vel Thea ex Legno Sassafras.

A Tea spoon ful of the Tubes of Leeks dried in an Oven & powdered in a glass of white Wine Night & Morning a good remedy in the Gravel

Three Sermons

1 Isaiah XL 6, 7, 8

II 1st Peter I. 24, 25

III On the same text

From Bp S—y manut

Setauket 14 Δ 1815

Setauket & Islip — 1835
1838

Glory be to thee O LORD —

Isaiah XL. — 6, 7, 8

The voice said cry, & he said what shall I cry? All flesh is graſs, & all the goodlineſs thereof, as the flow of the field. The graſs withereth the flower fadeth; because the spirit of the Ld bloweth upon it — surely the people is graſs. The graſs withereth, the flower fadeth, but the word of our G— shall stand forever —

This affecting paſsage from Isaiah is almost in literal terms quoted, by St Peter & applied to the state of the Xt & J Xans. That we may judge of the propriety & that we may feel the force of the apo application of it, we must first attend to the design of the prophet in its original delivery. By looking at the intention of A G- when he spake in times past unto the Fathers by the prophets, we shall probably the better understand, that application, which the appostles make of the old prophets in the N T- to lead us to Xt, who is the only attonement for sin, & saviour of men—

By attending to the great mercies & deliverances, which G- hath wrought for his people in times of old, we shall have, our faith in his goodness strengthened, & our hope enlivened & shall be the better disposed to trust in his power & truth, that as he is always the same & changeth not, he will fulfill the ~~prom~~

promises, of his mercy to us, as he did to his old servants, & give us both abundant reason & greatful hearts, to join them in chanting the chorus of his praise — For he is good, for his mercy endureth forever —

It is well known from the history of the Bible, that G- gave up his old covenanted people, into the hands of their enemies, as a punishment for the sins they had committed against him. Ten of the tribes of Israel were conquered by Shalmanaser king of Assyria & carried captive by him, from which captivity they never returned. About the space of 150 years after this, Jerusalem was also taken by Nebuchadnezer king of Babylon & carried into captivity by him for 70 years.

The reasons assigned for these heavy judgements from the indignation of G— are the crimes of the Israelites against his law. They rejected his worship, & went after the false Gds & idols of the heathen round them, or joined the worship of idols with the worship of the true G—. They practised iniquity & oppression, in their courts & in their legal decisions: The widow & the fatherless, the stranger & the poor, could find no justice against the rich & powerful. Favour not justice, the perversion of the law, not the decisions of equity were the result of their administration. They withheld the tythes & offerings from G— & if they brought sacrifices to him, it was of the vile & maimed, the refuse of their flock—

Where these great vices openly prevailed, we cannot suppose that the more private ones ~~we~~ were less frequent. When the great men were corrupted, we cannot suppose the lower class of people would be more pure. Irreclaimable in their wickedness, the justice of G- came on them to the utter destruction of their nation & country —

G- had promised to Abra^{m}. & the fathers of this people, that Mesiah the Sav. of men, the blessing of all nations, should be born of their posterity. To David & his family, this promise was renewed & confirmed. It therefore became necessary, that the ~~d~~ descendants of Abm, especially that the family of David should be preserved & ~~the~~

known. The destruction of Judah therefore did not end in total ſeceſsion like that of the ten tribes. When the destined period of their slavery had been determined on them, G- remembered his mercy & his promise to Abm, & David, & delivered the Jews from their distreſs, & brought them into their own country again. Seventy years had been determined of G- for the duration of the captivity of Judah. The reason aſsigned, for this precise period, is, that the land might enjoy her sabbaths. As a mark of confidence in him, & as a tribute to him who had litterally given them that good land, G- had directed the Israelites to let their land lie fallow every seventh year, that it might rest from tillage & from bearing the burden of its crops: a memento of gratitude to G— for the good land they injoyed, & for their rest & peace in it; & also to be an earnest & pledge, of that rest which all good men hoped to enjoy with G— in heaven. This command they neglected, & their captivity was to continue, so long that their country might lie desolate, & untilled, till it had enjoyed the sabbaths of which they had deprived it. Every seventh year ought to ~~have~~ have been a year of rest. But seven times seventy are 490; so long had the country been deprived of the rest which G— had commanded. Jerusalem according to the cronology of the bible, was taken in the reign of Zedekiah, 588 before Xt.

If to this number you add 490, it will carry the time up to the reign of Saul, when this neglect of y- law begun —

It may justly excite our wonder bb that neither David nor Solomian took care to have this matter remedied. Probably they may have attempted it, & may in some degree have restrained the wicked practise — But it ought to be remembered here, that the authority & evil examples of Kings & great men, have a much greater influence to introduce, degeneracy of principle & corruption of manners among people, than the authority & good example of those who themselves are good, can have to introduce & confirm the reformation of any evil practice. —

The perverse inclinations of the human heart, & the force of evil habits coincide with the former, & give energy & rapidity to their influence: Whereas there is nothing to assist the latter, but the small & weak remains of conscience & sense of duty. The example of general practice too, are on the side of the former; while ridicule & reproach are the sure attendants of the former.—

For this reason we may more justly wonder at the patience & forbearance of A G—in so long bearing with the neglect of so plain & positive a command. His property is always to have mercy; nor does he mark with rigour, or punish with haste the transgressions of men.

Till national wickedness becomes general, or while any prospect of amendment remains, the goodness of G— withholds the punishment due to the wicked. Nor is he disposed to involve the righteous with the wicked in the vengeance which his justice reluctantly inflicts. Let us call to mind the mercy of G— when at the entreaty of pious Abram, he promised that ten righteous persons should save Sodom from destruction to which it was devoted, & let that instance bear witness to his goodness.

Probably all the instances of vice & immorality among the Jews both in religion & morals ~~are~~ were progressive. They began in smaller instances, & among a few people — & though they may have been checked by the authority of good kings & the example of pious persons yet at last becoming so prevallent & general that no human prospect of amendment remained, the justice of G— interposed, to vindicate the authority of his laws & correct that immorality which his goodness could not prevent. By his prophets G— often threatened his people with the arms of the Babylonians: They disregarded his threats & the power of the Babylonians finally subdued them. ~~Cruelly~~ Cruelly, & according to the dictates of their own revengeful & proud heart did they execute the judgements of G— on the unhappy Israelites. For their cruelty in this instance, as well as for their other crimes, G— threatened to punish them: and at the end of the 70 years he brought the Medes & Persians against them under the command of Cyrus who fully revenged on them, the heavy destruction they had executed on Jerusalem — The conqueror set the captive Jews at liberty, & published a decree which enabled them to return to return to Judea & rebuild Jerusalem —

This return of the Jews from their captivity is the subject of the prophecy in the chapter from which the text is taken. The country between Judea & Chaldea was a vast desert, called the desert of Arabia — hot & dry & full of mountains & craggy rocks. In the spirit of prophecy, the holy man, hears a cryer making proclamation, to prepare a way for Jehovah, through this wilderness, by filling the vallies & levelling the hills, making the crooked paths of the road straite, & the rough places smooth. He consider & speaks of the return of the Jews from Babylon, as parrellel to their deliverance from Egypt, when vast deserts lay in their way to the promised Canaan. G— marches before them, all obstructions are removed, & plenty of water provided for them. Jehovah hath redeemed his servant Jacob. They thirsted not in the deserts through which he made them th go, waters from the rock he caused to flow for them &c. This certainly cannot relate to the deliverance from Egypt, except by analogy, (XLIII - 18, 19) for he had said, Remember not former things; & the things of antient times regard not, i.e, the deliverance from Egypt, Behold I make a new thing, even now shall it spring forth, yea I will make in the wilderness a way, in the deserts streams of water.

In this view of the gracious intentions of G- to the people, the prophet is directed to speak comfortable words to them, animating words to Jerusalem, to declare to them that their warfare, their captivity is fulfilled, & the expiation of their sins is accepted: That G- proclaimeth his intentions to go before them, through the wilderness of the deserts of Arabia; to supply all their wants, & remove all obstacles out of their way, in their march to their own country, where they again should be established, to the conviction of all nations, that this salvation was wrought by Jehovah, whose mouth had promised it to them. No flesh, no human power should share the glory of their deliverance with him for all flesh is grass, weak & impotent to deliver, as the herbage of of the field; & all the glory & power, transient & perishing like the flower of the field, withering & decaying, when the wind, the displeasure of Jehovah bloweth upon it, but the word, the promise of G- shall stand forever —— This seems to be the literal meaning of this prophecy, & this meaning seems to have been fulfilled in the redemption of the Jews, from the captivity of Babylon, which the goodness & power of G- wrought for them. From this view of the matter, some useful hints may be drawn to which we shall do well to attend, that we may form the conduct of our lives according to the will of G— made known to us & may remain in his favour, & under the protection of his power ——

1 It should teach us to abide by that religion & divine worship, which G— hath appointed in his word, & not set up our own imaginations & inventions, in opposition to it— These people neglected the worship which G— had appointed, & refused to support it in the manner in which he had directed, & by that means they brought on them his judgements—

2 It should teach us faith & confidence in the mercy & goodness & truth of G—, that he ~~wi~~ will accept our penitence & reformation, when they are hearty & sincere: that in the midst of his judgements, he will remember his goodness & truth, & graciously regard the prom

ise of his mercy & acceptance, which he hath made to us through the mediation of his Son.

3 It should teach us, that every thing that comes upon us either in judgement or in mercy is from G— the Ld Jehovah, whose word none can resist, whose counsel non can frustrate— That all flesh is grass, utterly weak & insignificant. When heat & drought assail the grass, it fadeth & withereth; so doth human power when the displeasure of G— bloweth upon it. In his divine & Alm. power therefore let us put our trust, knowing that on our repentance, he will for Xt sake pardon our misdeeds, & protect us by his favour from all adversities—

1 Peter 1. 24.25

For all flesh is graſs, & all the glory of man, as the flower of graſs. the graſs withereth, & the flower thereof falleth away- but the word of the Ld endureth forever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.

These words of St Peter, are a quotation from the Prophet Isaiah. (The paſsage from Isaiah, was the subject of the sermon in the morning, as far as its literal meaning was concerned) - There are however in the context of Isaiah, several expreſsion, which shew that the literal was not the only meaning, which the prophet had in view. But that the holy inspiration of G— extended his prospect far into future ages, even to the full accomplishment of the divine will, in the redemption of the world by JESUS the mediator of the new covenant, the saviour of men from the captivity of Sin & death — a captivity infinitely more rigorous than the thraldom of the Jews under the kings of Babylon, & which more eminently shewed the goodness & power of G— in delivering his faithful people from it. + Let us then attend to those expressions which point out the spiritual meaning of the prophet; & then we will attend to the use which St Peter hath made of this passage. In the 2 v— of that chapter, the prophet is directed to proclaim to Jerusalem that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned— for she hath received of the

2d. double for all her sins. This cannot relate to the punishment of the sins of Jerusalem, by the Babylonish captivity. We cannot conceive, that the goodness or justice of G— should exact double punishment for the sins of any people. His property is to have mercy, & to punish with less rigour, than our sins deserve. The ~~tr~~ translation therefore of this passage, by a late eminent Hebrew critic, is probably the true one, as it is more reconcilable with the declared properties of the divine nature. *Speak ye animating words to Jerusalem, & declare ye to her, that her warfare is fulfilled, that the expiation of her iniquity is accepted: that she shall receive at the hands of Jehovah, (blessings) double to the punishment of all her sins.* Could this declaration be fulfilled in the temporal restora tion of the Jews to their own country? They it is true returned to Judea, & had leave to rebuild their cities & the temple, but they were still in subjection to the Persians who had conquered Babylon & released them from ~~th~~ their captivity. ~~but~~ [illegible] Nor did they ever recover their freedom, but were ever in subjection to some foreign power or other

Again Isaiah saith, that in the fulfillment of this prophecy, All flesh shall see together the salvation of our G- As eminent as was the restoration of Jews from Babylon, it was not an event, which so intermately concerned the whole world, as to justify this strong expression. Though therefore the restoration of the Jews was first, it could not have been the principal object of this prophecy. Their redemption from Babylon is clearly foretold. But to do justice to the prophet, we must suppose that restoration to have been, an image or shadow, to point out a redemption of an infinitely higher nature, & of more importance to the world, than the return of the Jews from ~~th~~ their captivity. *That* event concerned them only or principally — but this *prophecy* concerned all mankind —

Of this spiritual meaning of the prophecy i.e. that it did relate to the redemption of the ⊙ by J Xt, we have the testimony of John the Baptist & of Xt himself, that the passages just read did relate to the preaching of John, & to the introduction of the kingdom of G— by Messiah

He it was, who was to effect a great deliverance not only for the Jews, but for all mankind, by freeing all who should believe in him, from the power & punishment of sin & death. To them the prophet could with equal truth speak animating words, & declare that the warfare of Jerusalem, the holy city of G– most high, was accomplished, that the attonement for the iniquity of the inhabitants was accepted; & that they should receive blessings, double, from the hand of G– to all the troubles & sorrows which they had endured in this world, of sin, infirmity & death — with equal truth could he make this declaration, as declare to the Jews the end of the captivity of Babylon — Those passages therefore which literally mention the deliverance of the Israelites from captivity by Cyrus; are spiritually to be understood of & applied to, the redemption of the world, by J Xt & to the recovery of man, from the captivity of sin & Satan, which is to be obtained through him— Not only this passage of Isaiah, but many other passages, in his prophecy, & in the prophecies of the other prophets, are to be understood & applied in the same sense. Did this admit of any reasonable doubt, it would be removed by St. Peters, quotation of that passage, as in the text.

The meaning of the expression, both in the prophet & by the apostle, *All flesh is grass*— can only be, that human glory or power, is of a weak & transient nature, & unable to help or sustain itself, but the word or power or decree of G— is stable & permanent, it endureth forever. The distinction between the carnal & spiritual Israel — the opposition between the flesh & the spirit — the temporary nature of the oeconomy of Moses, & the perpetual duration of the dispensation of salvation through Xt, are where more clearly marked, even in the N. T. than they are in this prophecy of Isaiah. We cannot reasonably suppose that the prophets at most view, was to comfort the Jews, with ~~bare~~ barely a promise of the restoration of their civil & religious polity; with the rebuilding of Jerusalem & the Temple, & the re-establishment of their sacrifices & religious worship. These are in the law & in the prophets, declared to be earthly & transitory, shadows & figures of better things to come. They were soon to paſs away & give place, to greater & more permanent bleſsings; to spiritual redemption, even from sin & death; to an eternal inheritance in the heavenly city of G— Jerusalem which is above — & of which the capital of Judea, was but a type & figure. This was according to the original appointment of G— the earthly Canaan, & all things belonging to it, was but a figure, of G— heavenly Kingdom — This is agreeable to St Peters application of Isaiah in the quotation he hath made of him — This is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you Jews, — The same word which Isaiah preached unto your fathers. Under the figure of redemption from Babylon, by Cyrus, he shadowed forth that redemption, from sin & the grave by J Xt which the gospel plainly declares to you. Under the restoration of your fathers to their own country, & the rebuilding Jerusalem & the Temple, he pointed out under the vail of prophecy, the glorious dispensation of the gospel, by which mankind through J Xt are restored to the favour of G— which they had lost through the captivity of sin & death; & to the hope & capacity, of obtaining through obedience to his gospel, a heavenly inheritance in the city of G— most high. This is the salvation which Isaiah saith, *all flesh shall see together* —— But let us here take notice, that when Cyrus published his decree, for the releasment of the Jews from captivity, it was general & without any exception.

None were excepted from the previledge of returning to their own contry; none were compelled to go. The mercy was put into their power, but they were not compelled to accept it.— Many accepted it & did return to Jerusalem—

Many more were so content with the land of their captivity, with the possessions they had acquired, & the good things they injoyed, that they chose to remain behind, & give up Jerusalem forever, even the Temple, the worship of G— & all ~~th~~ the previledges of their own religion & laws. The type & the thing typefied, must bear a resemblance to each other. When the Gospel was published, by Xt & his aps, it was freely offered to all who heard it. No force was used, beyond that of reasonable motives

& arguments. They who rejected it, like the Jews in Babylon, chose to remain in the state of their captivity under sin & death. They were content with this world, & with the pleasures & possessions they could obtain in it, & chose to abide the consequence. They who received the gospel, like the Jews who accepted the free grace of Cyrus, were not discouraged by the self denials & hardships of Xty, any more than the returning Jews were discouraged, by the ~~ha~~ hardships & difficulty of a journey from Babylon to Jerusalem, through the barren deserts of Arabia. They pressed forward into the K of G— that they might by holy baptism be enrolled members & citizens of the new Jerusalem, & might partake of all the blessings of redeeming love, in the free grace of the gospel. As G- supplied the travelling Israelites with necessary food & water, in the uninhabited wilderness, so doth he supply the faithful members of his Xt, with all things necessary to their passage through the wilderness of this world, till they finally come, to the heavenly city of G- Say ye, proclaimed the prophet, Jehovah hath redeemed his servant Jacob - they thirsted not in the deserts, waters from the rock flowed for them - he clave the rock & forth gushed the waters. - He made in the wilderness a way, & in the deserts streams of water. As he supplied his people in the wilderness, so hath he provided in his

&c every thing necessary for the comfort & support of his faithful people, travelling on to the city of G— his word, his ministers to instruct them— & excite them to their duty— his worship & sacraments to mend the hearts, to correct its evil propensities & promote those which are good, & especially to convey to them, the gifts & graces of his own most holy spirit, to enliven their faith & hope in him, to enable them to resist the temptation of the world, of their own evil nature, & of the great enemy of G— & all goodness—

For all flesh is grass, as unable to help themselves to any thing spiritually good, forgiveness to their sins, strength to their weakness, knowledge to their ignorance, deliverance from their captivity to sin & death, as the Jews were to return from their captivity without the decree of Cyrus; whom G— raised up for their restoration, or to travel through the barren wilderness without the support of his providential ~~[illegible]~~ care.

And this is the case with all men in all periods of the world: They are called into the XX of G— & put under the direction, of its laws & ministers, under the discipline of his word & sacraments, because all flesh is grass, utterly unable to help themselves, because the utmost ability of human nature, is only like the flower of the field, gaudy & showy, but of no power or permanency or real efficacy, it fadeth & passeth away & cometh to nothing —— G— is our only hope & strength, a present help, in time of trouble & distress. And from all things which dis—

tress us, he will deliver & save us, if we put our trust in him & obey him. But if we refuse his free mercy & grace, conferred on us by his Son, who hath redeemed us thro' his love; if we refuse to obey him & do those things, he hath commanded, & choose to take up our happiness in this world, we shall be left to the course of our own choice, as the Jews who refused to return~~ed~~ from Babylon, were left in the land of their captivity, & were forever excluded from the privilleges of their religion & public worship, & to suffer under all the distresses which befell the country in which they remained—

For this reason G— calls us, & if we refuse not to come, takes us into his Xp, a heavenly society, more distinct from the world in which we live, than Jerusalem was from Babylon. In it we are put under the guidance & inspiration of his holy spirit, that we may have strength & power to obey G— to do those things he hath commanded, & live in all holiness & righteousness, before him to the end of our lives —

N. B. The greater part of the following
sermon & part of the foregoing was preached
at the funeral of Gilbert Floyd 1832

Part the second

On sunday last bb, I preached to you from a paſsage of Isaiah, of which the text is a quotation by St Peter. The paſsage from Isaiah, I took as the subject of my morning sermon, & considered it, merely, in a literal point of view, as it respected the return of the Jews from Babylon — But it was then observed, that this literal view of the prophecy, though it was the primary, yet it could not have been the only or principal end of the prophet. He uses expreſsions far beyond any event which happened to his countrymen on that occasion — expreſsions to of deliverance which was not to be peculiar to the Jews, but common to them with the other nations of the world.

+ To give this prophecy therefore its full meaning, it must be extended to that spiritual redemption, of men, from the captivity of sin & death, & to those spiritual blessings remission of sins, the presence of the holy spirit of G— the resurrection of the body from death, & everlasting happiness in heaven, which G— has provided in his son J— Xt— To this sense of the prophecy, the authority of St John Baptist, & of Xt himself will directly lead us. In this sense St Peter quotes & applies the passage, & in this sense it was considered on Sunday afternoon—

|| Some further observations which I had not time then to make has induced me

to bring this subject once more before you —

It has been observed that the meaning of the expression All flesh is grass, as it is used by the prophet & by St Peter, relates to the weakness & inability of man to deliver himself from evil, or to procure to himself any good. — The Jews could not deliver themselves, indeed no human power without the interposition of G— could free them from the captivity of Babylon, support them through the deserts of Arabia, & enable them to rebuild Jerusalem & the Temple, in opposition to the efforts, intrigues & force of the neighbouring nations — And the literal accomplishment of the prophecies of Isaiah, was above human ability, much more was the spiritual — the word, by which the gospel is preached unto you — It was long before observed by David, that

No man can deliver his soul from the hand of
the grave (LXXXIX) None can redeeme his brother
from death, nor give to G— a ransome for him
(XLIX) And who but G— can forgive the sins
of men? Who but he alone, can give strength
to human nature, & enable it, to walk in holiness
— Who besides him can give the grace of repent-
ance, & pour balm on the wounded spirit? Who
but G- alone can grant a resurrection from dea-
th, & eternal felicity to the penitent, in heaven?
What G- speaks shall come to pass; his word
shall not return to him ineffectual, it shall
accomplish the ~~word~~ end for which it was spoke ca
But in these respects, the utmost power
of man, is feeble & weak, as the grass which
falleth before the scythe of the mower. His
most brilliant attempts, his utmost not have

ingenuity to save himself, will wither & pass away & come to nothing like the flower of the field. Human nature therefore can have no prospect of relief from misery, but through the goodness & mercy & power of G— And this goodness & mercy can only be extended to him thro' the attonement of JESUS. So true is it, that there is no other name, under heaven given to man, through whome he can obtain life & salvation, but only the name of our L J Xt.

Absurd therefore is it for him to contrive ways & means ~~for~~ of salvation for himself. They will fail & come to nothing. The only reasonable plan for him, is ~~for him~~ to pursue to abide by what G has directed, & follow what he hath commanded; for the word of Jehovah abideth forever, & will surely accomplish his purpose ——

This word of Jehovah, is the Gospel which is preached unto you. That directs you to seek admision into the ++ of G— to live in that ++ in obedience to all that G— hath commanded, & in all holiness of life —— Look now & see whether this be not your real state, with regard to your deliverance from sin & death: And that you may look at it, in a true point of view, consider whether this be not your true state with regard to the things of this world in which you live, which you seem to have now at your command, & to be able to manage them, now according to your own will & discretion —— When you have exerted your best skill & prudence, & laboured diligence on them, how often does the issue, turn out very different from what you expected? even when you are conscious, you could not have conducted better. How often are you disappointed in scenes of pleasure, from which you expected great enjoyment? from grasping the riches of the world when they appeared to be within your reach, & you could seize them when you pleased? How often too, are your disappointments occasioned by some trivial affair, which would have been of no consequence, had it not taken place just then. Consider these things & then say, whether a man can by his own wisdom & power & art & management, command the pleasures & riches of this world? —

Look again at the scenes of ambition, which delude & torment & perplex the world. In absolute governments, places of honour & dignity depend so much on the will of others that no man can command or appropriate them to himself. And in elective governments they depend on the voice of the people often times hard to be obtained & harder to be kept. So that when a man has by art & management, got into the post he aimed at, he is sometimes thrown suddenly from it, by a change of popular sentiments or obliged to relinquish to save his reputation —

To ascribe these things to chance is to ascribe them to the G— of fools, for none besides worship chance. G— who made, governs the world, & conducts the affairs of it so, as best to promote the final good of his reasonable creatures — To this G— even kings & princes & governors of the world are equally subject with others. The strength & power of nations & armies, are no sure security to them against disappointment & trouble.

He who commands the world commands them, & will conduct all things to the good of

the whole, bring order out of confusion, peace
out of war, & finally blessings out of all the evil,
wicked & contentious men occasion in the world.

Look now at yourselves in another light, as
creatures living in this world, who preserves
your life? Is it your own wisdom & care?
why then do men die? for few die willingly.
Why are they sick — to be sick is disagreeable
& what no man chooses. When you are hun-
gry you eat, & eating preserves your strength —
But is it your own contrivance that you eat
or is it, the result of your own art that your food
strengthens you? — Why then does the stomach
sometimes fail? Put food into it, it will nei-
ther digest nor nourish you; & in spite of
food & medical art, & the care & anxiety of ~~frien~~
friends, you die. Who then can con—

mand his own life or health, & say I will live I will be in health & be obeyed!

How often are schemes of pleasure, of riches or ambition ~~[illegible]~~, laid with all human art, & with the greatest prospects of succeſs, cut off by death, unexpected & for which we looked not — *All fleſh is graſs*, as unable to save or help itself as the graſs is to resist the mowers scyth — *The glory of man as the flower of graſs* — as unstable, uncertain, & as little to be depended upon. *The graſs withereth, & the flower thereof falleth away*, so is human life —

If now human power & art, are so ineffectual with regard to the things of this world, what can we expect from them, with regard to the things of eternity, which are so much more out of our sight & out of our reach;ª To deliver the captives of sin & satan & the grave, to restore sinful man to the favour of his holy creator, to give life from death, liberty from condemnation, eternal life in heaven, are matters so utterly beyond all human ability, that the mind recoils from the very thought, & flies to Jehovah, G— of hosts G— almighty, as the only refuge in time of trouble— He decreed & sent his son, to preach the gospel, the word of salvation spoken of by his prophet, to the poor, to poor miserable man; to heal the heart, broken by sin & condemnation; to preach deliverance to the captives of satan, & recovering of sight to the blind, with ignorance & error— to set at liberty them that are bruised, with the heavy load of guilt unpardoned, & of the wrath of G— unallayed & unappeased; to preach the acceptable year of the Ld, the day of grace & salvation, to all who would return from their captivity, to the freedom of G—'s children — His son came into the world & offered himself up, a sacrifice of attonement, for the sin of it — He instituted his Xp, his family, his household, called also his, or his body. He appointed its government, he ordained its sacraments; he established its laws: he directed its manners: He encouraged it, by his promises — He conferred on it the gift of the H G; He supports by his grace — He protects it by his power, & he will save it by his own merit & might — Into this holy Xp, holy from its relation to the son of G— he directed his Aps to receive all who believe in him, by baptizing them in the name of the F & of the S & of the H G—. And then to teach them to do all things whatsoever he had commanded —

With his aps he promised to be present even unto the end of the world. But the Aps lived not beyond the common term of human life. In the government & ministry of the Xh, they were succeeded by others, & to their successors Xts promise descends — with them & with their successors he is now present, & will continue to to be present, as long as his Xh shall endure.

The commission & presence, therefore which Xt gave to his Aps, still continues. Men of all nations, are still converted & taken into his Xh by those who holding any part of the apostolic commission, are sent to proclaim the gospel — the good news of salvation through Xt & to open the gates of his Kd to the penitent believers in him, that being admitted by holy baptism, they may under the guidance of the H-G- fulfill the will of Xt by doing those things which he hath commanded, & living Godly, righteous & sober lives according to his direction. Then shall they obtain forgiveness of their sins, peace of conscience, a happy death, a joyful resurrection & a triumphant entry into his heavenly kingdom & there live with him forever & ever. — Who but G- could do this for you? Who but the Alm: whose own arm could bring him salvation, could accomplish the mighty work, & make all flesh see together the salvation of G-? Vain & helpless is human power, in the things of eternity.

To deliver from death & condemnation

to open the gate of everlasting Life, All flesh is grass, & its glory but as the flower of the field: it withereth & fadeth away & is gone — nothing remaineth stable & forever permanent but the word of Jehovah — Your duty therefore requires you, to trust in the word of this Jehovah — to seek admission into his Xh, by the regeneration of holy baptism, if you have ~~a~~ not already obtained that happy privilege — to comply with all the ordinances & institutions in his Xh, with an honest & upright heart — to live constantly in his fear, & obediently endeavour, to do whatsoever he hath commanded — to pray constantly to him for his H. Sp., & faithfully to remain in the unity of his Xh — For let us remember Xt hath but one Xh bound & cemented together by love. Among the many parties into which Xan professors are divided, happy will it be for you if you are not led away from that true branch of Xt Ch, to which by G—s grace & mercifull providence, you at present belong. No where B.B. will you find the government, the doctrines, the sacraments which Xt hath appointed, more conformable to the word of G— no where the worship more divine, or which you can so well understand — or in which you can openly & audibly join with your lips, as well as devoutly with your ~~he~~ heart. No where will you find the duties of penitence & faith, or the virtues of the Xan life, more strongly & closely urged. Only take care to comply with the directions of the Ch, & on a religious account, you will have no temptation to leave it. But if you lightly regard the advantages which the X+ holds out to you; & profess it & live in it, as though you belonged not to it, no wonder no serious impressions are made on you, or that you should be deluded away, from the X+ of Xt, by those who appear to have more religion, than you find in yourself For let it be remembered, that whoever leaves the unity of Xt Xp, cuts himself off from union, with him who is the head of the X+

Since then it appears in every light, that all flesh is grass, weak & unable to help itself, to preserve its own life, to support its own strength, to provide for its own ~~hap~~ happiness, either in this world or in the ~~nxt~~

rupt; & that the word or purpose of Jehovah endureth & shall stand forever—the sure foundation of being & happiness to every thing that exists; seeing he hath provided an attonement for the sins of the world, in the sacrifice & death of his own son, & hath through him promised pardon to all faithful penitents; seeing he hath instituted his Xch to receive all who turn to him, that under the guidance of the H G they may serve him in holiness & righteousness all the days of their life, & being trained up in Xan graces & virtues, may be fit companions for the saints in glory; & hath promised to give them eternal life, when the resurrection being past, they shall in the train of their ~~[illegible]~~

Redeemer & Judge enter the holy city of G— Jerusalem which is above — Let your faith & hope & trust rest in him who is alone able to save you — in his holy Xp serve him faithfully, worshipping him in truth & sincerity, doing with a ready mind whatsoever he hath commanded, & obediently refraining from all things that he hath forbidden. So shall you have peace of conscience in this world; your death shall be rest & refreshment in JESUS; at the resurrection, of the just, you shall rise to glory & blessedness, & live forever with J— in the H Kingdm of A G— To this may the H Sp conduct us all through &c

Malachi I. 11.

For, from the riſing of the ſun, even unto
the going down of the ſame, my name ſh

Four Diſcourses.

NL - 30Δ 1802

Malachi I. 11.

For from the riſing of the ſun even unto the going down of the ſame, my name shall be great among the Gentiles, & in every place incense ſhall be offered unto my name, & a pure offering: For my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts.

The holy prophet begins his meſsage from God to the Jewish Church, with a reproof for their ingratitude, in withholding from him the tythes & offerings which he had commanded, or, at most offering to him the meanest of their flock, the maimed, the blind, & the diseased; ſuch as were not fit to be offered to their governor: And for their irreverence in his worship, thinking it a wearisome burden to attend upon it; &

when they did, treating it with contempt, snuffing at those sacrifices which their own impiety had rendered vile.

Such was the insensibility of this people, in their ingratitude & impiety that they justified themselves when reproved, & asked, *Wherein have we despised the name of the Lord*? & expected that God would *be gracious unto them*. Even the Priests offered polluted offerings on the altar, & then asked, *Wherein have we polluted thee*? So little did they regard the honour of God, or the sacred dignity of his worship, that none of them would shut the doors of the temple, or kindle the fire on the altar but for his own profit.

For these reasons, said God, *I have no pleasure in you, neither will I accept an offering at your hand*. *For from the rising* &c:

This text the Church hath ever considered ed as a prophecy of the manifestation of Messiah to the Gentiles, of their being called into the Church under the Gospel, & of the purity & divine nature of that worship which should then be paid to the Almighty creator of heaven & earth; & ſhe calls upon us at this ſeaſon to celebrate its fulfilment, by expreſsing our gratitude & praise to God for the great bleſsings thereby conferred on us. This, I trust we are ready to do with the purest devotion; for we are of the race of those Gentiles whom it pleaſed God to take into his Church, & make his people by the grace of adoption. Let this subject then employ our present meditations, that our hearts may feel that gratitude which our tongues ought to expreſs, when we consider the goodneſs of our God in designing such great bleſsings for us – in notifying y^{m} ſo early to the world by the mouth of his holy prophets, in ſo exactly & effectually fulfilling them in the person of Jesus the Redeemer, &

& in calling our forefathers to the knowledge of ſalvation through him. And let us, at the ſame time recollect the care & fidelity of his holy church in transmiting this knowledge, pure & uncorrupt to us, & in calling yearly upon us to remember & commemorate the bleſsings which divine goodneſs & love hath confered on us. This conduct will have a happy influence on our practice, & make us the better diſpoſed to live answerably to our Christian calling, & therby fulfil the gracious deſign of our heavenly Father in bringing us to the knowledge of his grace through Jesus Christ our Lord. All the diſpensations of God are intended to answer some end of his goodneſs & love to us — to take off our expectations & hopes from every other dependence, & fix them on him alone, because he alone is able to help us in our diſtreſs, to bleſs us & make us happy; to forgive our ſins, & heal our infirmities.

It is well known to all who are converſant in the history of the Bible, that it pleaſed God to take the deſcendants of Abraham for his peculiar, or covenanted people: That he gave them a new diſpenſation, in which the number of ſacrifices was increaſed, the preciſe mode of offering them pointed out, & to which many ritual obſervances were annexed. The great objects of this diſpenſation were, to retain that nation in the worship of the true God, the creator of all things, & breed them up in exact obedience to his commands — to prefigure & deſcribe the perſon & office, the atonement & ſatisfaction for ſin, of Meſsiah, whom God promiſsed to Adam as the *ſeed of the woman*, & *bruiser of the ſerpent*; & to Abraham as the *bleſsing of all nations*, that the world, through them, might know & reverence him when he appeared, confide in his atonement for the pardon of their ſins, &, by obedience to his instructions & commands, obtain, through his merits, everlaſting life.

For though the deſcent of Meſsiah according

ing to the fleſh was, by the appointment of God, to be of the ſtock of Abraham, & the testimonies relating to him were, of course, lodged with that nation where he was to make his appearance, yet the bleſsings to be obtained through Meſsiah were to be common to all nations, & not confined to the Jews, as the privileges of their religion were. Of his intention in this respect, God gave repeated notices. In the declaration to Adam Meſsiah is promiſed as the *ſeed of the woman*, Eve, the mother of all fleſh, before ſhe had any child. Of course the benefit of the promise belonged to all her deſcendants. To Abraham he is promised as his ſeed or deſcendant, but not as the peculiar bleſsing of his family, but of all the families of the earth, Gentiles as well as Jews.

And to this accord the prophecies of the Jewish ſcriptures. None of their prophets restrain the bleſsings of Meſsiah to their own nation excluſively of the rest of the world; & many of them

extend

But besides these authorities which prove it to have been the deſign of Almighty God to call the Gentiles in to be fellow-heirs with the Jews of the bleſsings of Meſsiah, there are some expreſsions in the text which must be understood of *them* only, & cannot be accomodated to the Jewish Church, nor to any great conversion of the Gentiles to *their* religion.

The Jewish ſacrifices were confined to the temple at Jerusalem, & they could not, without ſchism, have any other temple but that one. But the text speaks of the worship of the God of the Jews, the Lord of hosts, being extended over the whole world, from the rising to the ſetting ſun — of this events taking place among the Gentiles as contradiſtinguished from the Jews — among ye nations who were heathen idolators — of *incense*, being offered to his name & a pure offering, in every place, i.e. in all parts of the world. Now this could never take place upon the principles of the Jewish oeconomy which confined their worship to Jerusalem. Nor indeed without the abrogation of that oeconomy. It cannot therefore relate to any prosperity of the Jewish Ch^{ch}; but must be refered to the Ch.^{n} Ch^{ch} pervading the whole world by the appointment of God.

extend ~~theſe~~ bleſsings to all the inhabitants of the earth — By the pen of holy David God promiſed to give Meſsiah the *heathen for his inheritance, & the uttmost parts of the earth for his poſseſsion* (Pſ. II. 8) Isaiah is remarkably explicit on this ſubject, *They ſhall fear the Lord from the weſt, & his glory from ye riſing of the ſun* (Is. LIX. 19) And of the Church or kingdom of Meſsiah he ſaith, *Ariſe, ſhine, for thy light is come, & the glory of the Lord is riſen upon thee. For behold ye darkneſs ſhall cover the earth, & groſs darkneſs the people: But the Lord ſhall ariſe upon thee, & his glory ſhall be ſeen upon thee. And the Gentiles ſhall come to thy light, & kings to the brightneſs of thy riſing* (LX. 1, 2, 3) If to theſe teſtimonies we add that of Malachi in the text, *For from the riſing of the ſun, unto* &c: & no doubt can remain that it was ye original intention of God that all nations ſhould partake of the bleſsings of redemption through Meſsiah; & that he always declared this to be his intention by the prophets whom he ſent to his old people. ~~And~~,

And Bleſsed be his holy name, he hath graciously & gloriously fulfilled his merciful purpose in the manifestation of Jesus the Meſsiah of God, the Saviour of men, first, To the eastern Magi, the first fruits & fore-runners of the Gentiles, who came to Jerusalem to worship him in his infancy: And, ſecondly, To the nations & families of the earth without distinction, by the preaching & miracles of the holy Apostles & Evangelists, who, dispersing themselves through the Roman Empire, spread the knowledge of the Gospel from the rising of the ſun unto the going down of the ſame. Then the Church, the kingdom of Meſsiah, did literally arise, & shine; & the darkneſs which was on the earth, & the groſs darkneſs on the people, was dispersed by the knowledge of the true God, & of the only Mediator between God & man, which they carried through the world. Then, without a figure, the Gentiles were converted to the light of divine truth, & kings to the brightneſs of the Christian Chch.

Through the bleſsing of God on their labours, congregations of Christian worshippers were collected in all parts of the world from the east to the west: And Incense, prayer, & ſupplication, thanksgiving & praise were, in every place — among all nations — offered to the holy name of our

God, & a pure offering, even the commemorative ſacrifice of the body & blood of Christ in the conſecrated Bread & Wine of the Holy Eucharist.

To the truth of this representation Ecclesiastical history bears the fulleſt testimony.— So truly & exactly were the gracious purposes of God declared by his holy prophets fulfilled; & the name of the Lord of Hosts made great among the heathen. For even those among the nations who were not converted by the preaching & miracles of the Apoſtles were ſtruck with astonishment, & lost in wonder & admiration — confeſsing, that great indeed ~~was~~ is the God of the Christians.

To us the knowledge of that ſalvation, which the goodneſs of God opened to the Gentile world, by the manifestation of Christ to them, has by the good providence of God happily deſcended; & it becomes us to reflect on the high privileges & bleſsings we thereby enjoy — To compare the brightneſs of the light of divine knowledge & truth which now ſhines unto us, with the ſad & dreadful darkneſs of ignorance & error which before the coming of Christ overspread the earth — To recollect that very few nations have been converted to Christianity since the time of the Apostles & their immediate ſucceſsors,– And then we cannot fail to consider it as a particular bleſsing that the country from which we are deſcended, ~~may~~ embraced the Christian faith at an early period; having, in all probability, been converted by the great Apostle of the Gentiles when he went from Rome into Spain, & according to the old writers, to the *utmost bounds of the Western world* (Clem. epist. ad Corinth) a phrase by which the historians & poets particularly denote the British isles. It is no inconsiderable ſupport to this opinion that it has the sanction of St. Clement, on of St. Pauls fellow labourers, & of whom he says that his name is written in the book of life (Philipp. IV.3)

In that country Christianity hath ever ſince continued, though in very different ſtates– ſometimes perſecuted, depreſsed, obſcured, corrupted, then riſing in purity & flourishing in glory. may God protect it & bleſs it, &, for the glory of his name, preſerve it purity & peace.

Having received our holy religion, by the merciful providence of God, from the piety of our forefathers, pure & uncorrupt both in form & doctrine, let us thank God for the inestimable benefit, & take care that we hold fast the bleſsed hope it inspires, & preserve the precious treasure committed to us so as that we may transmit it to our posterity pure & undefiled from error in doctrine, ſuperſtition in practice, & wickedneſs of life — That, as far as depends on us, From the rising of the ſun unto the going down of the same, ~~the~~ name of God our Saviour may be great among the Gentiles, & that incenſe may be offered to his name, & a pure offering.

Part II.

Having considered the text as a prophecy of the manifestation of Messiah Christ to the Gentiles, & of the great ~~growth~~ increase & glory of his Church among them, when it should please to open his fold to the tribes of the earth, by breaking down the partition wall which seperated his chosen people from the rest of the world: And having shewn its fulfilment in the rapid spreading of the religion of Christ in the world, by the preaching & miracles of the holy Apostles & Evangelists whom he sent to publish the glad tidings of salvation to the world: I come now to consider the meaning of the expressions used in the text, & to shew what is [illegible] intended by Incense, & a pure Offering, which are to be offered to God in the Churches of the Gentiles; from which it will appear that the prophecy is truly fulfilled in the worship and service that is paid to Almighty God in those Chhs. I shall, therefore, endeavour to shew,

1. That *incense* is the prophetical expression to denote the prayers, & praises of the Chh offered up to God through the mediation of Messiah.

II. That the *pure offering* in the text is prophetic of, & denotes, the Eucharistic oblation of *bread* & *wine*, in the commemorative sacrifice of the death of Christ — the holy communion of his body & blood. And,

1. That *incense* is the prophetical &c.

That *incense* was offered with all the sacrifices under the law is evident from the directions given by Moses in the book of Leviticus. With every sacrifice, whether of animals, of bread, or of meal, a handful of *incense* is ordered to be offered. Even those sacrifices which were not burned on the altar, but were eaten on by the prieſts, or by the offerers, were to be accompanied by incenſe, which was to be burned on the altar to ſanctify the offering.— None of this incenſe was on any pretence to be reſerved, either for the Prieſt or the Offerer; the whole of it belonged to God, & was to be burned upon the altar. But,

Beſides the incenſe which was offered with the ſacrifices, there was a portion of incenſe, being a compoſition of odoriferous gums, burned morning & evening on the altar of incenſe, without reference to any particular ſacrifice.

That under the Moſaic law, incenſe denoted prayer we have the teſtimony of king David, who thus addreſſes himſelf to God, Let my prayer be ſet before thee as incenſe; & the lifting up of my hands— another phraſe denoting ſupplication— as the evening ſacrifice (Pſ. 141.2) which was never offered without incenſe.

To us Chriſtians this matter is put beyond all doubt by the Revelation of St. John; who says that the *odours*, or *incense*, which the four beasts, or beings, & 24 elders had in their vials when they prostrated themselves & worshipped the Lamb, *were the prayers of Saints* (Rev. V.8) He also deſcribes an angel standing at the heavenly altar, *having a golden cenſer; & there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all ſaints upon the golden altar, which was before the throne. And the ſmoke of the incense with the prayers of the ſaints, aſcended up before God, out of the angels hand* (Rev. VIII. 3, 4)

By this Angel is, without doubt, signified Jesus Christ, the angel of the covenant (Malac. III.) the mediator between God & man, officiating at the altar in heaven in virtue of his everlasting priesthood, & offering the prayers of all ſaints to the Almighty Father, & rendering them acceptable through the odour of his merits, & the prevalence of his interceſsion.

This myſtical meaning of *incense* lets us into the reaſon why incense was commanded to accompany every ſacrifice under the law. Incenſe ſignified the prayers of the offerer, & taught him that without the inward devotion of the heart, external worſhip by ſacrifice would not be acceptable to God. Prayer is a general term including ſupplication, confeſsion, praiſe, & thanksgiving. Whatever was the particular deſign of their ſacrifices, whether to deprecate Gods wrath, to make expiation for ſin, to expreſs their gratitude for favours received, or to ſupplicate the divine protection & providential care; they were all to be accompanied wt *incenſe*, to ſhew that unleſs the external ſervice which God had commanded in his worſhip was attended with internal correſponding diſpoſitions of prayer & devotion, of penitence, gratitude & praise, it would be unacceptable to him.

It has been obſerved that part of ſome ſacrifices was reſerved for the prieſts, & part for the offerer & his friends to be eaten by them as a feast upon the ſacrifice, in token of their being at peace with each other, & in friendship to God to whom the ſacrifice had been offered. But no part of the incense was reſerved: That was wholly conſumed by fire upon Gods altar. The reaſon was that prayer represented by incense, was wholly due to God, & to God only - no creature having a right to share it with him.

I take the liberty to mention here one circumstance relating to the legal sacrifices which, tho' not directly connected with my subject, may have its use. All the ſacrifices & offerings under the law were accompanied with Salt as well as incense — With all thy offerings thou shalt offer salt, said God (Levit. 11. 13) Salt signifies incorruption, ſoundneſs of mind in the truth, sincerity, peace & friendship. Every sacrifice, said our Saviour to his disciples, quoting the above paſsage from Leviticus, shall be ſeaſoned *ed with salt* — *Have salt* — truth & sincerity *in yourselves, & have peace one with another* (Mar. IX. 49, 50) In the same stile St. Paul speaks to the Coloſsians, *Walk in wisdom toward them that are without. Let your speech be alway in grace; ſeaſoned with ſalt* — with truth, sincerity, & wisdom — *that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man*, without bringing disgrace upon your holy religion, or running yourselves into needleſs difficulties & dangers.

Whatever may have been the occasion *salt* was considered by the nations of antiquity as the emblem of peace & sincerity; &, on that account, was used by them in the ratification of treaties & contracts — to denote the friendship & sincerity of the contracting parties, & the perpetuity of the covenant they had made. Instances to this purpose are not wanting in the Bible. God gave all the heave-offerings of the children of Israel to Aaron, & to his ſons, & his daughters — his family — forever; & of this gift he says, *It is a covenant of salt forever before the Lord* (Num. XVIII. 19)

In 2 Chron. XIII. 5, it is said, *The Lord God of Israel gave the kingdom over Israel to David forever, to him & to his ſons by a covenant of salt*. In both these places the expreſsion denotes the sincerity, reality, & perpetuity of the grant.

As by the incense in the legal ſacrifices the prayers & devotions of the offerers were represented; ſo the *salt* denoted their ſincerity, pureneſs of mind, steadfaſtneſs in the truth, unity with Gods Church, & peace with one another; & by it they were taught that all these qualifications were neceſsary to make their offerings acceptable unto God.

From the tenor of divine revelation as it now stands unfolded & fulfilled in the New Testament we know aſsuredly that *Jesus Christ is the ſum & substance of all the holy ſcriptures*, the archetype of the moſaic law, to whom all its rites & ceremonies, ſacrifices & oblations had respect, from wh^{m} they drew all their value, & in whom they were all fulfilled. For this reason I said that *incense* in the text expreſsed prophetically the prayers & praises that were, at a future period, when the desire of all nations should come, to be offered to God in his holy Church through the mediation of Jesus Christ; And this is abundantly confirmed by the above-cited paſsage from the Revelation of St. John, which deſcribes the angel at the altar in heaven offering the prayers of ſaints with incense to God. If we interpret this of any other than Jesus Christ, we make another Mediator & interceſsor, & high priest; Whereas he is the only Mediator between God & man, & has an everlasting priesthood, ſeeing he ever liveth in heaven to make interceſsion for us.

The incense under the law had no merit of its own, but drew all its value from its refering ultimately to the mediation & sacrifice of Meſsiah, to give efficacy to their prayers & praises, & render their ſacrifices acceptable to God. To the same mediation & all powerful interceſsion, the prayers & devotions, the incense of the Church of the ~~Church of the~~ first-born, gathered out of the nations of the earth, owe all their value & prevalence with God. Perfumed with the fragrance of his merit, they rise, through his interceſsion, from the golden censer at the altar in heaven, an offering acceptable to the Almighty Father. For almost 18 hundred years has divine worship & adoration been addressed to God through the express mediation, & in the adorable name of him to whom all the prophets bare witneſs, & in whom all the types & figures of the former dispensations are fulfilled, Jesus Christ the righteous, the Meſsiah of God, & the true & only propitiation for the sins of the world. And we trust in Gods merciful providence & gracious promises, that as it has been, & is now; ſo it ever shall be, world without end.

That it may be done to his glory & our own benefit, we must remember that external worship alone will not be accepted by him who is ye Lord of our hearts, & the God of our ſouls, as well as of our bodies; who, therefore, requires the worship & ſervice of the whole man — of the heart as well as of the lips — of the mind as well as of the knees. Without incense & salt the legal sacrifices were inadmiſsable — they could not be suffered to approach the altar. And prayer, if it be offered by the lips only, without the salt of true devotion, & ſincerity of heart, can never rise up as the incense before God.

That therefore, our prayers may be acceptable, the desires of the ſoul must accompany the words of the mouth, & we must be in heart & mind what the words of our prayers ſuppoſe us to be: And even the devotion of the heart must be sanctified by faith in the atonement & mediation of him by whose interceſsion alone ~~they~~ it can approach the throne of God.

Another circumstance neceſsary to the acceptance of our prayers is, that they be offered up in the unity of Christs Church. The promises of God are made to Christ the head of the Church which is his mystical body, & through him the head they descend to us the members. If we depart from the unity & communion of his Church, we cut ourselves off from him the head, & from the communications of his ſpirit, & from our right to the promises of God: We can have no certainty that our prayers ſhall be heard, or our praises accepted- no aſsurance of grace, or mercy, or pardon, or peace.

Another circumstance to which we ought to attend that our prayers may be acceptable to God is, purity of heart, & holiness in life, & manners. God hath told us that if we *regard iniquity in our hearts he will not hear us* (Ps. LXVI. 18) In the translation in the Prayer-book it is, *If we incline unto wickedness with our heart, the Lord will not hear us* (V. 16) It is not, therefore, enough that we are admitted ~~enter~~ into Christ's Ch̃h by baptism, & that, in unity with his Ch̃h, we offer up our prayers & praises in his name; but we must put iniquity & wickedness away from us, by repentance, & faith in him as the atonement for sin. If we do not, we regard iniquity in our hearts — in our hearts we incline unto wickedness. — our worship, proceeding from impure & wicked hearts, is impure & defiled, & God will not hear us. *We know that God heareth not sinner* — those who continue in habits of sin, impenitent & unreclaimed — who regard iniquity in their hearts, & practise it in their lives — *But if any man be a worshipper of God* — a professor of the true religion — a member of, & in unity with Gods Church — *& doeth his will*, *him he heareth* (Jo. IX. 31) — To do the will of God is, to obey God — to do whatever he has commanded, & to refrain from whatever he has forbidden. When it is the desire of our hearts, & the endeavour of our lives to do so, our worship of him in the unity of his Church, & through the Mediation of his adorable Son, our merciful Saviour, will be acceptable to him: Our prayers & praises will ascend up before him as *incense* presented by our great high-priest himself in heaven, who ever liveth to make intercession for us.

Remember & consider these things: They are serious ones, & demand your serious attention. You have the Bible in your hands: Examine for yourſelves & ſee whether what I have ſaid be not true. Only deal fairly with thoſe ſacred records. Let not attachment to party or ſystem lead you to put forced construction on what they ſay. They contain the history of Gods revelations to us, & make known the way of reconciliation with him. Some things which relate to the nature of God are above our comprehension, & are the objects of our faith rather than of our understanding: And some expreſsions respecting the mysteries of our redemption are not to be understood without exact attention: But what relates to our duty is plain, & obvious to every capacity; & wants only an unprejudiced, uncorrupt mind to ſee its meaning, & feel its force. God give us all that unprejudiced & uncorrupt mind, that we may ſee & follow the things which make for our peace, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Part III.

II. The ſecond thing which I purpoſed to ſhew from the text was, that the pure offering which it mentions is prophetic of, & denotes the Eucharistic oblation of bread & wine in the commemorative ſacrifice of the death of Christ, – the holy Communion of his body & blood.

However this ſenſe of the text may be overlooked & disregarded in the preſent time, when most people either disregard religion too much to think ſeriouſly about it, or weary themselves after new-fangled & ſtrange opinions, there is the fulleſt proof of its ~~being~~ having been the received interpretation in the next ages after the Apostles. The best authority to establish this point are the public offices of the Church. Particular writers may only speak their own ſentiments; but the offices of the Church speak the ſenſe of the Church. In the Liturgy which bears the name of St. Mark, ~~the firſt Biſhop of Alexandria~~, & was in common use in Egypt, Lybia, Pentapolis, & Ethiopia, & probably continues to be the Liturgy of the Chriſtians in thoſe countries to this day— In the hymn beginning, *It is very meet & right,* is the following— *Giving thanks*— *we offer unto thee, O Lord, this reasonable & unbloody ſervice* (λατειαν) *even that which all nations, from the riſing of the ſun unto the going down of the same, offer unto thee; for thy name shall be great among all nations; & in every place incense is offered unto thy holy name, & ſacrifice, & oblation* (See mede, p. 355)

To this teſtimony of the Liturgy of St. Mark, the authority of many, if not all the old writers on the ſubject, might be adduced to ſhew that the text was always considered by them as a prophecy of the Chriſtian ſacrifice of bread & wine in commemoration of the ſacrifice of the death of Christ for the ſins of the world. Should any ſuppoſe they were mistaken in the application, let it be remembred, that the opinion is so old, & ſo univerſal that we cannot account for it for it in any other way that that of apostolical authority.

Let it also be remembred that material sacrifies have ever made a principal part of divine worship in the true religion, & that by the appointment of God himself. There is therefore no absurdity in ſupposing there may be a material ſacrifice in the Christian Church. The nature of God is the same now it ever was; & so is the nature of true relegion — its form, or external appearance may change, its nature cannot.

The first instance of relegeous worship mentioned in the Bible is that of Cain & Abel. That ye worship consisted of material ſacrifice, at least was accompanied by one, appears from the history — Cain brought of the fruits of the ground — Abel of the firstlings of his flock. That God had commanded these ſacrifices is highly probable, because neither reason nor nature could ever have ſuggested to them the idea of worshipping the Creator, & rendering him propitious by offering to him the fruits of the ground, or the life of an innocent animal: But it is rendered more than probable by what St. Paul hath said of Abels sacrifice, By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain (Heb. XI. 4) To do a thing in faith means to do it because God has commanded it. What we do of our own heads, & according to our own inventions, can be no instance of faith in God, nor can it have any claim upon Gods acceptance. The declarations & commands of God are the only ground of faith in him. It manifests no faith in God to believe what he hath not said; nor to do what he hath not commanded. Therefore had not God given some command about sacrifices, Abel could not have offered his sacrifice in faith, because there would have been no ground for his faith to have stood upon. Accordingly, St. Paul hath told us, Faith cometh by hearing, & hearing by the word of God (Rom. X. 17) The reason, therefore, why Abels offering was accepted, & Cains rejected was, Abel offered in faith — he believed God, & obeyed his directions. Cain did not, but followed his own inventions.

It is to be presumed that the faithful ſervants of God continued to worship him in the way righteous Abel had done, till the flood, though no particular mention be made of it. Immediately after the flood Noah built an altar unto the Lord, & offered ſacrifices on it, & God accepted his devotion.

Abraham is the next of whose ſacrifices any notice is taken. His history informs us, that, wherever he fixed his reſidence, he built an altar unto the Lord, that his worship might be duly celebrated. This practice was continued by Isaac & Jacob; & probably by the more religious Israelites, till it pleased God to direct a complete ſyſtem of ſacrificial worship for them, after their redemption from Egypt. Then particular directions were given to Moſes concerning the beasts & fruits of the earth which were to be offered to God, & concerning the whole oeconomy of their worship, on all occaſions & under all circumstances. This oeconomy continued till the coming of Christ in human nature. So that till that period, at least, material ſacrifices made a great part of the true worship of God.

Many of theſe ſacrifices were of animals, & could not be offered but by ſhedding their blood. Others were of an unbloody kind — the fruits of the earth, ſuch as men used to eat & drink, bread & meal, & wine & oil. Hence probably our translators took the idea of calling them meat & drink offerings. But of whatever they consisted, they all had respect to him who, in the fulneſs of time, came from heaven to fulfil the types & figures of previous diſpenſations, by making a full & perfect atonement for ſin by the offering of his own body once for all (Heb. X.10) & from him they derived their whole value & merit. To him all the prophets bare witneſs, that through his name, whoſoever believeth in him shal receive remiſſion of ſins (Acts X.43)

His death being a perfect atonement for ſin, every other atonement, — all other ſhedding of blood became uſeleſs & ceaſed of courſe. All other ſacrifices were types & figures of his: His was the truth & reality represented by them. They were pledges & repreſentations of his atonement — looked forward to his offering of himſelf, & pointed him out as the propitiation for ſin. They were, by the appointment of God, offered to him as an expiation for sin; And the offering of them in obedience to his command, was virtually pleading before him the merit of that Lamb who was slain from the foundation of the world. By their reference to him, they became effectual to the purpose for which God had appointed them — the remiſſion of ſin to the faithful, penitent offerer.

That he might fulfil the types & figures of the former diſpenſation which all centered in him, Christ, the true high-priest, who maketh effectual atonement & interceſsion for ſinners, before he ſuffered on the croſs — nay, before he was apprehended by his merciless enemies — while he was free from con~~[illegible]~~straint, & perfectly at his own diſpoſal — having celebrated the Pascal memorial of the deliverance of Israel from the ſlavery of Egypt which was typical of the redemption of man from the ſlavery of Satan, offered himself — his Body & Blood — to God, under the emblems of Bread & Wine, a ſacrifice for the ſins of the world, & at the same time inſtituted the commemorative ſacrifice of the Christian Church, the Communion of his Body & Blood repreſented by Bread & Wine, to be offered in remembrance, or rather for a memorial of his offering himself for the ſins of the world, till he should come again to judgment. For he commanded his Apoſtles to do as he had done, to take Bread & Cup of Wine & Water, for such was the cup of bleſsing at the paſcal ſupper, to bleſs them with thanksgiving, & offer them up to God as memorials of his offering, & then to divide them among themselves, & eat and drink them as a feast upon the ſacrifice which had been offered.— All this was to be done for the remiſsion of ſins — that they partaking of this ſacrifice according to his will, might receive all the bleſsings & benefits of his offering & ſacrifice of himself to

God for the ſins of the world.

If it be admitted that the text relates to the Christian Church gathered from among the Gentiles, which all Christian commentators admit, little doubt can remain that the *pure offering* mentioned in the text relates to the commemorative ſacrifice of the Body & Blood of Christ in the holy Eucharist, which is, in all places, offered up by his faithful Church according to his command. There is nothing else in the ſervice of the Church which can with ſtrict propriety be called an *offering*, which ſignifies a material ſacrifice — ſome *thing* offered up to God in worship.

To explain this away by saying that the *pure offering* in the text relates to the prayers and praiſes of the Church, which ſometimes, though in a remote & ſecondary ſenſe are called *offerings*, is abſurd, becauſe the Hebrew word mincha means a material *thing*, particularly an offering of the fruits of the earth, *bread*, *meal*

&

& ears of corn, & is generally translated meat offering in our Bible, because, as I suppose, such things were the original meat or food of men: Nor will this interpretation comport with the text — the prayers & praises of the Church having been mentioned before under the name of incense. Besides; a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving means not simply vocal praise & thanksgiving, but a material sacrifice offered with praise & thanksgiving to God in grateful acknowledgement of his mercy, or to conciliate his favour. Such were the peace-offerings, & thank-offerings under the law. Therefore is the Eucharist of the Christian Church a sacrifice of praise & thanksgiving, because it is a material sacrifice of the fruits of the earth, offered to God with praise & thanksgiving in commemoration of the sacrifice & death of Ch^st, in humble acknowledgement of so inestimable a favour, & to intreat Gods mercy for our past sins,

&

& that through his goodneſs we may obtain all other benefits of Christs redemption.

This ſacrifice is called a pure offering by the prophet,

1. As it is opposed to those polluted offerings wch in the time of Malachi were profanely offered on the altar of God. Instead of bringing those animals which were without blemish to the temple, as God had commanded, the people through covetouſneſs brought those which were diseased, or lame, & of little or no worth; & the priests were ſo regardleſs of their duty that they accepted them & offered them on the altar against the prohibition of God, & in contempt of his command. For this reaſon God chargeth both people & priests with impiety & profaneneſs, & threateneth them with his judgments. And of the priesthood he saith, *Behold—the Lord—shall come ſuddenly; even the angel of the covenant— And he shall sit as a refiner & purifier of ſilver; & he shall purify the ſons of Levi, & purge them as gold & ſilver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteouſneſs* (Mal. III. 1, 2, 3)

This paſsage of the prophet evidently relates to the priesthood established by Christ in his Church, & to the Eucharistic offering instituted by him to be offered in every place where his name should be called upon in the whole world.

2. The purity of this offering appears from its own nature when compared with many of the Jewish offerings. Nothing which this world affords is more deserving of that appellation than bread & wine & water: Whereas the slaughter of so many animals as were daily offered at the temple must have been attended with some disguſting circumstances, & required the strictest attention to cleanlineſs, & the ſtrongest perfumes to prevent its being utterly intolerable.

3. The Christian ſacrifice of bread & wine is properly a *pure offering* because of its relation to him who is *perfectly pure*, being consecrated to be the representative body & blood of the immaculate *Lamb* of God. Thro' whose merits God grant eternal life to us all. amen.

There is a not

Part IV.

Having shewn that the text is a prophecy of the propagation & establishment of the Christian religion in the world, & of the worship which should, in Xts Chch, be paid to our Almighty & most gracious Creator — *in every place*, without the exclusion of any nation or people from that bleſsed ſociety — that the *incense* mentioned in the text is prophetic of the prayers, praises, & adorations offered to God the Father, the fountain of the divinity, through the mediation of his adorable Son Jesus Christ — that the *pure offering* is prophetic of the Christian ſacrifice of Bread & Wine, the Eucharistic memorial of the offering of the body of Jesus once for all, I shall now close the ſubject with ſuch reflections on it as ſuggest themselves to me.

It was observed in the last ſermon, That Christ, in order to fulfill the types & figures of the Jewish dispensation, which all centered in him the true high-priest &c: (Page 33, & so on to, *for the ſins of the world* p. 35, at the top)

As I apprehend this account of Christs offering himſelf to God for the ſins of the world, though undoubtedly the opinion of the primitive Church, to be different from the ſentiments of most Christians in this age, & eſpecially in this country, I have thought it my duty to treat of it a little more particularly.

That Christ did offer himself to God a willing victim for the ſins of men, all Christians are agreed. But they are not all of one mind respecting ye time & manner of his doing it. The most common opinion is, that he *offered himself on the croſs*. But besides that this is no ſcripture expreſsion, the opinion does not agree with the *history of* the transaction.

The ſcripture says that ~~he~~ *offered himself without spot to God* (Heb. IX. 14) And that *his own self bare our sins in his own body on*, or to, *the tree*, i.e. the croſs (1 Pet. II. 24) But it is no where said that he offered himself on the croſs. That he did offer himself is agreed — otherwise he would not have been our high-priest. That he bare our ſins on the croſs, & that there his ſacrifice for ſin was finished by his death is agreed. The question is, When was this offering of himself made? For,

As it does not appear from ſcripture that he offered himſelf on the croſs, ſo neither does that opinion agree with the hiſtories which the holy Evangeliſts have given us of the tranſaction. They tell us that when he retired from his laſt ſupper over the brook Cedron into the garden, his agony immediately commenced — the wrath of God againſt the ſins of men falling on him. But can we ſuppoſe that God would lay the burden of ſin on him before he had offered devoted himſelf to bear them for us? His offering of himſelf muſt therefore have been previous to his agony. To ſay that he offered himſelf when he undertook to be our Redeemer, is foreign to the purpoſe. He then offered himſelf, being the Son of God, to be the Redeemer of man, & ~~[illegible]~~ ye Almighty Father accepted him. As God he could neither ſuffer nor die. That he might ſuffer & die for us, he became man; & the offering he made for us was of that natural body & blood which he took on him in the womb of the holy Virgin.

I ſee not how to avoid the conſequence, That he offered himſelf to God for our ſins, ~~when~~ at his laſt ſupper, under the ſymbols of bread & wine — That he then devoted, conſecrated himſelf a ſin-offering to God for the world — the whole human nature.

It is to be remarked, that he called the bread &

the cup which he bleſsed on that ſolemn occaſion, his body & blood, which, said he to is Apostles, is broken & given ~~&~~ poured out & ſhed for you & for many for the remiſsion of sins — all in the present time — is now *given* — is now *ſhed*. Of his natural body & blood he could not speak in this manner, for they were there present, unbroken & unshed. We must, therefore, underſtand him as ſpeaking of his representative, sacramental body & blood which he then appointed the bread & the cup to be.

He could not break his own natural body, nor shed his own natural blood, ~~he~~, therefore did both in a mystery — offered his natural body & blood to God, under the symbols of bread & wine as pledges of his then devoting himself — that humanity which he had taken on him — a willing sacrifice for sin — consecrating himself to be a ſin-offering for us, & for all men. And immediately after (or poſsibly (during) his agony in the garden, he willingly delivered himſelf unto his enemies who came with *the traitor* to ſeize him, that they might break, & tare ~~&~~ kill that body, & spill & ſhed that blood which he had already, under the emblems of bread & wine, ~~he had already~~ offered to God, a devoted victim for ſin. — I say *willingly*, for he could have commanded myriads of angels to his reſcue. But he had *offered* & *devoted* himſelf to God for us. — He had said, *Lo I come to do thy* will O God, & he would not go back; for how then could the ſcriptures be fulfilled, *That thus* it behoved Christ to ſuffer?

After this every thing has the appearance of force & constraint. By force they carried him before their high-priest, & the unrighteous tribunals of Pilate & Herod. By force he was led to Calvary, & nailed to the croſs; where the brutal ſoldier pierced his ſacred ſide, & opened that fountain for ſin & impurity in which all must be cleanſed who ſhall ſee the ſalvation of God.

All this was neceſſary that the ſcriptures might be fulfilled. They had deſcribed him as *deſpiſed & rejected of men, a man of ſorrows, & acquainted wth grief — oppreſſed & afflicted, yet not opening complaining his mouth — brought as a lamb to the ſlaughter, & as a ſheep before her ſhearers is dumb, ſo he openeth not his mouth* (Isa. LIII) Brought indeed to the ſlaughter was the bleſſed Jesus — unreſiſting, & patiently ſubmitting to the malicious violence of thoſe who ſought his life. In executing their malice upon him, they killed that ſacrifice wch it he had before voluntarily offered to God under the ſymbols of bread & wine.

In this whole tranſaction there was the greateſt poſſible conformity to the ſacrifices under the law, all which were types & figures of this. — When any one offered a burnt offering, for instance, he was to bring it to the door of the tabernacle, & there offer it to the Lord by laying his hands on the head of it. The offering was then made, though the ſacrifice was not completed till the victim was killed, which might be ſometime after, the blood ſprinkled round the altar, &

the body burned upon it. The killing of the ſacrifice was no Priestly office — it might be done by the offerer, by the Levites, or any other person. The duty of the Priest was to attend the offerer at the door of the tabernacle when he made his offering, to sprinkle the blood when brought to him, & to place the victim, when ready, on the fire of the altar. All this required time; ſo that some interval, & when there were many offerings a conſiderable one, muſt paſs between the offering being made, & the ſacrifice completed.

In like manner, Christ having offered himſelf to God, ſometime elapsed before the ſacrifice ~~was~~ was completed by his ſuffering death upon the croſs. As under the law the killing of the ſacrifice was no priestly office, but might be done by the offerer, or any other for him; ſo Christ was put to death by those who were the executioners of the unjust ſentence by which he died — In that his Priesthood was not concerned. As a Priest he offered himſelf a victim for ſin — as a Priest he now ſprinkles the blood of the offering, i.e. applies the merit of.

of his death by making interceſsion for us in heaven: And in this ſenſe it is he has an everlasting Priesthood, because he ever liveth to make interceſsion for transgreſsors.

When Christ offered himself under the ſymbols of bread & wine, he commiſsioned & commanded his Apostles to do as he had done— to take & bleſs bread & the cup, & make an offering or oblation of them to God with praise & thanksgiving, & then to eat & drink them, not as common food, but as memorials of his offering— in commemoration of the ſacrifice he made for ye ſins of the world. St. Paul says that the bread & the cup thus bleſsed are the communion of the body & blood of Christ. Now communion means mutual participation— to give & to receive. The holy elements being offered & given to God by his Priest who receives them from the people as their offering, they become God's property, & are returned to us by his minister to be eaten as a feast upon the ſacrifice. It is an established maxim that all who eat of a ſacrifice are at peace with God, & made partakers of all the benefits of the ſacrifice. The Christian ſacrifice, the ſacramental body & blood of Christ, being first offered to God by his priest, in commemoration of the willing ſacrifice he made of his own body & blood to God for the ſins of men is eaten & drunk by his members, that they may receive the benefit of his meritorious atonement. And if they do attend the holy ſolemnity with requiſite faith & repentance, there is no doubt but that they do receive all the benefits of Christs paſsion & death; because our great high-priest who made the atonement for us, hath, by his own blood, entered into the true Holy place, i.e. the heavenly, there to appear in the presence of God, & make continual interceſsion for us.

As, therefore the meat offerings, & all the ſacrifices of the law looked forward to Christ to come, being shadows & reſemblances of good things—spiritual bleſsings expected through him; so the Christian ſacrifice looks back to Christ already come, & commemorates what he has done to take away the ſins of the world,

&c

& make reconciliation between God & man; & applies the benefits of his ſacrifice to all faithful Christians.

From the view we have taken of this ſubject, the advantages which arise to us from a devout participation of the Christian ſacrifice of bread & wine in commemoration of the offering of the body of Jeſus once for all muſt be very apparent. They are remiſsion of all paſt ſins — grace & ſtrength to live in newneſs of life for the time to come — reſurrection of the body to life everlasting at the day of judgment. For when, with penitent hearts & lively faith, we partake of the ſacramental bread & wine, by which that body & blood of Christ which he offered to God for the ſins of the world are repreſented; & by which the merit of his oblation & ſacrifice are exhibited & pleaded before the Almighty Father by his authoriſed Prieſt here on earth; &, as we truſt & are confident, by our great High-priest himſelf in heaven, we do in virtue & effect, in truth & reality — to all ſpiritual purpoſes — partake of the body & blood of Christ, & therby are aſsured of peace & friendship with God, ſeeing we are fed with his food at his table; & of all other benefits of Christs paſſion & death.

Hear how the bleſſed Jeſus expreſſed himſelf to this purpoſe — *Verily, verily I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man* — a phraſe by wch the humanity of Christ is expreſſed — *& drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoſo eateth my fleſh, & drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, & I will raiſe him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, & my blood is drink indeed,* i.e. my flesh & my blood are the *true*, the only food, which nouriſheth unto life eternal. *He that eateth my flesh, & drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me* — hath his life in me — *& I in him* — by my Spirit. *As the living Father hath ſent me, & I live by the Father; ſo he that eateth me, even he* he ſhall live by me (Jo. VI. 53, 54, 55, 56, 57)

He had before declared himſelf to be the *bread of life*— *the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die*— *the living bread, which came down from heaven*: *If a man eat of this bread, he shall live forever*: *And*, saith he, *the bread that I will give, is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world*. (V. 48, 50, 57)

Compare all this with what our Saviour did when he instituted the holy Communion, & it will be hard for you to understand it of any thing else. For he then did give his flesh— his body & blood— for the life of the world, when he offered himſelf to God a ſacrifice for ſin; to redeem the world from *death* which through ſin all men had incurred. And he did then appoint & direct the manner in which we are to *eat his flesh & drink his blood*, that so he may dwell in us & we in him— in which we may eat that *true living, lifegiving* *bread which cometh down from heaven; of which if a man eat he shall live forever*

ever, even by partaking, with penitence & faith, of that bread & cup in the Chriſtian ſacrifice of the Eucharist which our Saviour ſaid ~~was~~ is his body & blood, which is given & ſhed for the remiſsion of ſins.

That his diſcourſe to the Jews in the 6th of St. John might not be underſtood in that groſs ſenſe in which they applied it — of eating & drinking his natural fleſh & blood — he concludes with obſerving that the words he had ſpoken were *life & Spirit* — to be underſtood in a myſtical, ſpiritual ſenſe, & not in a groſs carnal manner. And ſo we are to underſtand him when he ſaid, at the inſtitution of the Chriſtian ſacrifice, of the *bread*, *This is my body*, & of the *cup*, *This is my blood*; not of his natural body & blood, but of his ſacramental, myſtical body & blood, which he then appointed the bread & the cup to be; that in them a memorial of his offering of himſelf might be made before Almighty God; and that we, worthily receiving them, might in them receive the power, virtue, & effect of ye life giving body & blood of Christ. To this doctrine ~~our~~ Church in her Catechism bears witness. In answer to the question, *what is the inward part, or thing signified* by the bread & wine in the Communion? she says, *The body* & blood of Christ, which are verily & indeed taken & received by the faithful in the Lords supper.

And, if the holy oblation of the Christian sacrifice was, as has been shewn, typified by the sacrifices of former dispensations, particularly by the meat offering, ~~and in the~~ or the oblation of the fruits of the ~~earth~~ — foretold by prophets — instituted by Christ himself — celebrated by the holy Apostles, & Church of Christ to this day — & be fruitful of so many & great advantages, then it is evident, that the strongest obligation lies on the Priests of the Christian Church to continue to celebrate these holy Mysteries, & on all Christian people to attend devoutly on the sacred solemnity. That so incense may, in the prayers praiſes & thanksgivings of the Church, be offered to the holy name of our God in every place, through the mediation of Jesus the Saviour; & a pure offering, in the constant oblation of his mystical body & blood in the holy Eucharist, for a memorial of him till he come again — So shall his name continue to be great among the Gentiles, from the riſing of the ſun, unto the going down of the ſame

The backwardneſs of people to join in the celebration of the Christian ſacrifice is very apparent I have, on former occaſions, endeavoured to remove all ſcruples & doubts that can ariſe on a religious account. I have, however, reaſon to ſuppoſe that many, otherwise ſerious & well diſpoſed perſons refrain from approaching the altar, not so much from any religious ſcruple, as from an apprehension that it will oblige them to greater ſtrictneſs of life, & deprive them of ſome

~~indulgencies which they might otherwise enjoy without reproach.~~

It is to be hoped that all Christian people have a disposition to do what God requires of them, & to live as he directs. If they have not, they are out of the reach of reason & argument, & indeed of divine authority; & must, for what I see, be left to the consequence of their own perversity. If they have, I know not how they can reconcile their conduct with such a disposition. The command of Christ, Do this in remembrance of me is absolute, without any exception: And if they have a disposition to obey him in all things, they certainly will do so in this which is fruitful of so many advantages to themselves.

With regard to any particular strictness of life that is required of communicants, it is neither more nor less than what is required of Christians; for it is the duty of all Christians to obey Christ, & live as he directs. Nor is there any great difference between refusing to be a Christian, & refusing to obey Christ. Such a life as is consistent with the Christian character is conſistent with the character of a communicant: And ſuch liberties as are inconsistent with the character of a communicant are inconſiſtent with the character of a Christian. And they are also inconsistent with the favour of God. His favour I hope you are all anxious to obtain, &, of conſequence, that you will be anxious to obey his holy will in all things— That as he has given his Son to be the atonement for your ſins, & hath appointed the ſacrifice of bread & wine in his Church to commemorate the ſacrifice of his death, & to make you partakers of all the bleſsings of it; ſo you will devoutly & thankfully avail yourſelves of that inestimable privilege, & join his holy Church in celebrating the praise of your Creator, in making known the mercy of your Redeemer, in magnifying the majesty of the ever bleſsed Trinity for the manyfold bleſsings of divine providence & grace — for our creation — for our redemption — for ye remiſsion of our ſins — for the hope of a bleſsed reſurrection & happy acquittal at the last day, & of that eternal life which God who cannot deceive hath promised to all who obey the Gospel, & love the appearing of his Son: To whom &c: Amen.

Malachi I. 11.

For from the riſing of the ſun, even
unto the going down of the ſame &c:

Four Discourses.

Matt. IV. 23.

And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their ſynagogues, & preaching the Gospel of the kingdom, & healing all manner of ſickneſs, & all manner of disease among the people.

I observed ~~to you~~ the last ſunday that by the kdm of heaven in the parable of the king who would reckon with his ſervants was meant the Church of Xt in this world. I have ſince thought it may be of ſervice to us, if I endeavoured to establish & illustrate that point. It will, I trust, help us to understand better thoſe places in the New Testament where it is used, & will thereby be of ſervice to us in our Christian life. It is true that Xt, as he is one Mediator, so he hath but one Xx. But the

Xx of Xt is made up of a continued ſucceſsion of men, from the time in which he went about all Galilee, preaching &c: to the Genl judgement at the last day be finished, for not till then is he to deliver up the kdom to the F. that God may be all in all (1 Cor. XV.24) till then, therefore, his kingdom must consist of two kinds of members, some living in this world, that is, all faithful Xns, the obedient worshippers of the holy Trinity – God Almighty, & followers of the Lamb in a holy Xn life; & of those whom the good providence of God hath removed out of this mortal life to his own heavenly paradise, there to rest in peace & hope & holy refreshment, till the genl reſurrection & judgment shall call them before the tribunal of their Saviour & their God, to hear their ſolemn & final acquittal with all thoſe who fear God & love the appearing of his Son in glory — Come ye bleſsed children of my F, receive the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

Very different is these two states of Xts Xs. In this world militant & ſuffering, ſurrounded with enemies & temptations, encumbered with the lusts & paſsions of men, ſubjected to the weakneſses & ſickneſses, the pains, & accidents, & ſorrows of h. nat. & at last to the death of the body. But in the ſtate of ſeperation of the ſoul & body which awaits us all, they rest from all the labours, & trial, & pains, & ſorrows of this world; they are at peace with God, & in the holy refreshment of divine conſolation. All the happineſs which can be enjoyed in the ſeperate ſtate of the ſoul is theirs — the company of blessed Spts. & holy angels, the sense of God's love, & the assurance of a glorious resurrection, & happy acquittal in the judgement to follow, & of a triumphant entry into heaven there to live forever.

And he who promised is able to make good his word. All this shall come to pass to them, w.n being joined by the happy company of saints, who being found alive at the last coming of Xt, shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, & shall remain forever with him in the kdm of God's glory.

For the conduct of our life, & regulation of our faith as Xns it becomes necessary for us to make that distinction between what is said of the kingdom of God or of heaven — the state of Xts Ch in this world, & the kdm of God's glory in the world to come: Lest by applying what is said of one state, to the other, we err in our faith, & be in danger of erring also in our practice.

What is ſaid in the text is repeated with but little variation in Matt. IX.35. In both places it evidently relates to that Xx, or holy ſociety, of which he was then laying the foundation by his preaching the Gospel — the good news of ſalvation thro' him, to a lost & miserable world; & establiſhing the faith of men in him by a ſeries of the most beneficent miracles on the bodies of thoſe who were diseased among the people.

On this foundation he ſoon after ſent forth his Aps to build, by preaching the same Gospel of the kdm in his name, & in his name tog working all miracles to establish the faith of men in him, & call them into his Xx, that they might be ſaved.

Of this Kdm it was he ſpake, Matt. XXIV.14, when he said to his Aps that before the destruction of Jerusalem, the Gospel of the Kdom = the doctrines of his Xx, must be preached thro' all Judea, & thro' all the world, for a witness to all nations against the Jews. That this was really done we have the testimony of St. Paul, who saith of the preachers of it (Rom. X. 18) *Their sound is gone forth into all the earth, & their words to the ends of the world*. He also tells the Xx of Rome, that *their faith was spoken of throughout the world* (Rom. I. 8) To the Colossians he writes (Col. I. 6, 23) that *the truth of the Gospel was come, not to them only, but to all the world, & was preached to every creature*. Clement Bp of Rome, the cotemporary of St. Paul, & who is honorably mentioned by him, as having his name written in the book of life, saith in his Ep. to the Cor.ns §. 20. *The nations beyond the ocean*, a stile by which Great Britain was then known, *were governed by the precepts of the*

the Lord. I have mentioned these matters only to ſhew that they could be foretold only by him who had all power in heaven & earth, & therefore was able to foresee & foretell them.

In Matt. VIII. 12. Xt saith, *Many shall come from the east & west, & ſhall ſit down with Abm, & Isaac, & Jacob in the Kdm of heaven; But the children of the Kdm shall be cast out into outer darkneſs, there ſhall be weeping & gnashing of teeth*. This declaration of Xt evidently relates to the calling in of the Gentiles to the Xx of God, to enjoy its bleſsings and privileges in common with the old patriarchs; & to the rejection of the Jews, who were then the Kdm or Xx, or choſen people of God, from that bleſsed & eminent ſtation, into the darkneſs & miseries of this apostate world which is enmity to God; & into that anguish & despair which neceſsarily attend on a state deprived of the favour & bleſsing

ſing of God. In this ſenſe hath this declaration of Xt been ever understood by the more eminent Commentators both antient & modern, & if we uſe the same candid & fair interpretation toward the Goſpels, that are uſed towards other books, eſpecially to thoſe which abound in parables & figurative expreſsions, it will be impoſsible to understand it in any other ſenſe, than as containing a propheſy that many from all parts of the Gentile world ſhd be converted to God by the preaching of the Aps, & ſhould be taken into the Xx of God, & made partakers of all the bleſsings & priviledges of it, but that the Jews who were then the children of the Kdm, the members of Gods Xx, should, for a puniſhment of their obſtinate impenitency & unbelief, for their abandoned hypocriſy & profligacy of manners, for their abuſe of Gods mercies, & disregard of his prophecies, & promiſes & threats, be cast out of his Kdm, or Xx into the world which lieth in darkneſs, & be deprived of that favour of God & of the blessings of his Xx, which they had hitherto enjoyed.

Let us remember, B, that the same or similar wickedness & impenitency on our part, will cast us out of the favour of God, as well as it did the Jews. God is the same yesterday, to day, & forever He is no respecter of persons, but will deal with every one according to his works.

Let us remember another thing also, that the judgments of God on sinners in this world, are typical & figurative of that final destruction he will at the day of judgment make between the good & the evil, between those who believe & obey him, & those who disregard & obey him not. As sure, therefore, as God casts off & punishes wicked & impenitent people in this world, by his temporal judgments, he will cast off & punish the finally wicked & impenitent, at the day of judgment, with everlasting destruction from the presence *of the Lord, & from the glory of his power* (2 Theſs. I. 9)

It is also to be remarked on this declaration of Xt, that the Gentiles were to be called into the same Xx of which Abm, & Isaac, & Jacob were members. For they were *to ſit down with them*. The Greek word means *to ſit down to meat*. They were, therefore, to enjoy all the bleſsings & priviledges of the Xx of God, in common with Abm, & Isaac, & Jacob; But the children of the kdm were to be cast out. Hence arises another argument to prove that this declaration of Xt relates to his Xx or kdm in ye world, & not to the kdm of heaven, or of God's glory in the world to come. From that kdm there will be no ſuch thing as *caſting out*. That kdm is an everlasting kdm, & to endures throughout all ages. The inhabitants of it are past all trials, & changes, except from *glory to glory*; & are to continue forever happy with God their Creator & Saviour.

But Abm, & Isaac, & Jacob with whom the Gentile

converts are to ſit down in the kingdom of heaven, are not now members of Xts Xx or kdm in this world; therefore, it may be objected, this declaration must relate to the kingdom of God's glory in the world to come, which Abm, & Isaac, & Jacob now enjoy.

That these patriarchs are not now members of the Xx of God, or the kdm of heaven in this world, in its militant ſuffering state, is readily granted; nor were they so when Xt made this declaration concerning them. But that having finished their courſe in faith & in the fear of God, are admitted to that state of rest, & peace, & refreshment, ~~that~~ & to all the happineſs which the human ſoul or ſpirit can enjoy when seperated from the body, in heaven, in the place appointed for the reception of the ſouls of his faithful ſervants till the day of judgment, is also readily allowed.

And this will prove that the Xx of God, or kdm of heaven in this world, & in paradise, the heaven of bleſsed ſouls released from the burden of the flesh, are one & the ſame. It will prove further, that he who is out of the Xx of Xt, the kdm of heaven in this world, are out of the Xx or kdm of God where Abm, & Isaac, & Jacob enjoy rest from their labours, & the aſsurance of a bleſsed reſurrection at the last day, & a happy eternity in the kdm of Gods glory. But it is denied that Abm, & Isaac, & Jacob are now in the poſseſsion of that glory & happineſs promised to the faithful ſervants of God after the final judgment at the last day, when having received their glorified bodies, they shall with the heavenly hoſt enter triumphantly, in the train of their Redeemer Jeſus Xt, ~~enter~~ into his everlasting kdm, the kdm of the eternal glory of God.

I am ſensible that this position comports not with the prevailing doctrine & belief of this country. Yet what I have said has been affirmed on no slight grounds. St. Peter said of one of the patriarchs, even David expreſsly, that he *is not aſcended into the heavens* (Acts II. 34) And St Paul saith of the old patriarchs, among whom he mentions Abm, & Isaac, & Jacob, that they all *obtained a good report*, or character, *thro' faith*, but yet *received not the promise* — perfect happineſs of body & ſoul in heaven — *God having provided* — foreseen — *some better thing for us*, the faithful members of the Xn Xx, *that they without us should not be made perfect*, i.e. in happineſs & glory eternal of body & ſoul in the kdm of God in heaven (Heb. XI. 39, 40)

Was more proof neceſsary to establish this point, it would be no hard matter to produce it, from the holy ſcripture, from the offices of the Xx, from the most approved writers antient & modern, & from the reaſon & nature of the thing. Neither, however, the time, nor the compaſs of a ſermon will permit my purſuing this ſubject further.

N L 4 ⊙ Δ 1802 Bp S—y

2 ⊙ ad '04

'06

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1813

St Mark VII 36

And he charged them that they should tell no man; but the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they published it —

The occasion of the text was this. Our B. L. having in the benevolent exercise of his miraculous power, given hearing & freedom of speech, to a man that was deaf & had an impediment in his tongue, & whome his friends had brought to him, that he might receive his blessing & feel the happy influence of his healing hand — their Joy, ~~their~~ & astonishment were so great at seeing the glorious change produced that they exclaimed

He hath done all things well — Previous to this however, while performing the miracle, he had to avoid as much notice as possible taken the young man aside, & when he had compleated his cure he charged the friends of the young man that they should not tell of it: but the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they published it —

It is ~~it~~ always right that on proper occasions we should enquire into the reasons of our Redeemer's conduct: Because ~~his~~ its conduct is generally a pattern for us: & a pattern of such perfection, that we can scarcely err in the imitation of it: Never indeed, but when we enthusiastically attempt to copy the exertions of his divine power, or to imitate those actions which were peculiar to him as a prophet & the Redeceiver of the world: & even there, the reasons of his actions generally afford a good rule for the direction of our conduct, both towards our bre:n & toward our Maker —

An inquiry may therefore very properly be made here, why our Sav. sometimes directed his miracles to be published, that it might be known, how great things G— had done! And at other times, strictly charged the spectators that they should conceal his miraculous virtue. For the proof of his Divine mission, in a great measure depended on his miracles, & if they were concealed, the necessary proof that he proceeded forth from G— would be wanting —

We may observe therefore on this ~~oc~~ occasion, that as our Sav.r knew the hearts of men he knew when the publication of his miracles would do good & when not, & if he ordered them to be proclaimed in the one case & concealed in the other, a sufficient reason is assigned for his conduct. And it may be farther remarked that the miracles which he ordered to be proclaimed were generally performed ~~[illegible]~~ in the earlier period of his ministry, that so the country might be duly informed of the appearance of so extraordinary a person & a proper trial made of the reception he was likely to meet with —

Several good reasons may be assigned why he directed his miracles on particular occasions ~~[illegible] [illegible]~~ to be more concealed & private.

1 He thereby obviated the envy & illwill of his enemies, especially of the scribes & pharisees From his knowledge of the hearts of men & from the trials that had been made, he knew

the rancour & animosity they bore against him, & that no other consequence of his miracles was to be expected from them but the increase of their rage & blasphemy. They had given sufficient demonstration of this temper by ascribing some of his miracles to a collusion with the prince of the Devils. And though the H JESUS sometimes condescended to reason with them on the absurdity of their malice, yet he generally chose to retire quietly, rather than by entering on his owne vindication, to engage in disputes, which would only increase contention without doing them any good. Their malice he knew was plotting & would finally accomplish his condemnation & death. And although he came into the world to die in that ignominious manner in which he suffered & in so doing to give his life a ransom for the world, ~~yet~~ the time of his death was not however yet come. Before he suffered it was nessary he should prove his humanity, & his personal ministry must last till that important point was established. Being in the form of man he acted on all occasions as prudence would direct men to act. When his enemies were inflamed he withdrew himself from them, & concealed himself, deferring his journey to Jerusalem till their passions had subsided & then went up to the feast privately, that he might not provoke them. Untill having fully executed his prophetic office, & the time being come, that his priestly office should begin in his offering himself for the sin of the World, he went openly & boldly & triumphantly, tho humbly & meekly into Jerusalem, riding, as

-cording to the prediction of the prophet on the unbroken foal of an ass, while the Multitude attending prepared his way by spreading their garments & strewing palm-branches before him — treating him as a prince & a conqueror, shouting Hosannah to the son of David — blessed is the king Messiah who cometh in the name of the Ld

2 Another reason why our Sav. wished to conceal his miracles on certain occasions, was probably to prevent all cause of tumult & sedition. It is well known that the Jews expected a Worldly conqueror for the Messiah. And when the miracles of Xt had establised his character; & the Jews saw all the powers of nature subject to him, we may readily suppose how eagerly they would expect him to exert

that power for their deliverance from the Romans who held them in subjection. An instance directly in point is recorded by St John.

Having fed 5000 people with five loaves & two small fishes, the men for whom the miracle had been wrought, concluded that he must be that prophet &c When JESUS therefore perceived that they would come & take him by force to make him a king, he departed again into a Mountain himself alone. For who was so fitt to command a large army as he who could feed so large a number with so little food—

It is also worthy of observation, that the Sbs & Phs, gave at first no opposition to our Redeemer but seem to have waited to see whether he would assume the title of their deliverer & exert his miraculous power in their behalf. With this view too it is probable they proposed that insnaring question about giving tribute to Ceasar that they might draw his intentions from him & convert them to their own purposes. When they found he was not likely to come into their views they plotted hi death, because they pretended they thought that his conduct would give offence to the Roman Emperor — & it was better that he should die, than that by his living the vengeance of Rome should come on their nation. So necessary was it that the H.J. should guard against appearances & give no just alarms to a jealous government. nor furnish his adversaries with any plausi accusations against him —

3 The last reason I shall mention why our Sav. might desire that some of his miracles

should not be known is, that he might set us an example of humility, & teach us to do goo for G.s sake, without courting but decently avoiding the acclamations & applause of the World.

The Disciples of Xt ought to be content that G. knows & approves the sincerity with which they serve him in doing their duty & with the quiet satisfaction that arises from a sense of doing their duty for his sake, because it is his bleſsed will. They serve one who sees in secret & who will one day openly reward their secret good works. Our bLd. has then in this instance, shewed us in practice what in another place he has taught us by precept, not to do our good works to be seen of men, that our vanity may be fed by their applause, if we do, in that applause we have our ~~to~~ reward & are to expect none from our H. F. For why should be reward, what was done more for worldly fame than to please him? On proper occasions, where our duty, the good of others, or G's glory require it, our light is to shine before men, that beholding our good works, they may glorify your Father who is in heaven: the glory of G. is to be regarded, but nothing must be done from vanity & ostentation. This rule ought ever to be regarded, it ought ever to regulate our conduct especially in religious matters. Whatever may be our endowments, they are the gift of G. & ought to be employed to his glory, not to our own exaltation & to acquire a name in the world. How contemptible & wicked then, must that vanity be in the eys of G. how contrary to the example of the meek & humble JESUS - which prids itself, in either preaching or praying well, in being attended by great crowds & in running from place to place to display their self importance, in their oratory. The glory of G. & the good of souls are the plea in their favour, & where it is a true one there is nothing to be said against it - but so long as the appearance of vanity is so strong, the ~~ap~~plea must be supposed to be a mere pretence —

Whether the reasons assigned for our Ld conduct be the only ones, or whether there were others to us unknown, as he did not divulge them we must remain ignorant. Those I have mentioned are sufficient to satisfy us that he acted with reason & with prudence & that the preventing of evil & sin others ough in all reason to influence us in our conduct as well as in our hope of doing good.

On the whole we may observe with regard to our Sav. general mode of conduct, that as he rose superior to all the pomp & vanity of this World on the one hand; so did he on the other, rise above all fear & dread of the wrath & vengeance of man when it stood in competition with his duty. With lowliness & ~~hum~~ humility he gave forth the glorious light of his divine & perfect conduct, for an example & an excitement to us, to abound in all manner of good works; & with firmness & resolution did he reprove vice & villany whenever it came in his way — May his example be the rule of our conduct through life, but more especially may we have grace to follow the example he has set us in particular transaction — to endeavour to do our duty in such a way when it can be done as may not excite the contradiction or opposition of open enemies, nor raise confusion & tumult among people, nor give rise to an idea of vanity & ostentation, but content with doing our duty in peace & quietness look to G— for approbation & reward —

[illegible] 2nd

This morning while [illegible]

[illegible] in the [illegible]

[illegible] directed [illegible]

order to be published [illegible]

[illegible] the plantation [illegible]

[illegible] orders. [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] to those who [illegible] them.

But another [illegible] which the

[illegible] suggests to me [illegible] the [illegible]

of three hundred [illegible]

[illegible] of the [illegible]

[illegible] the [illegible]

[illegible] all [illegible] of good [illegible] to write
[illegible] ought to [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] of [illegible] in this way —

Why [illegible] [illegible] the rule of [illegible]
through life, that [illegible] especially [illegible] may [illegible]
[illegible] the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
particular [illegible] [illegible]
the duty in [illegible] a way [illegible] it can be done
as they all [illegible] the consideration of [illegible]
[illegible] of [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] of [illegible] to [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] to [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

Part 2nd

This morning while considering this text, we employed ourselves in the inquiry why our Sav. sometimes directed his miracles to be published — & at other times strictly charged the spectators to conceal his miraculous virtue. This inquiry was then pursued & such arguments offered for the propriety of Jesus' conduct as I trust proved satisfactory to those who heard them.

But another inquiry which the text suggests to us, is respecting the conduct of those persons who being charged by our Sav. to tell no Man of the miracle wrought on the deaf & dumb man, so much the more blazed it abroad. Some have sup

-posed that these people committed a very great sin in disregarding y^{t} command. The B. J. gave no reason for his charge, & they might foresee no inconvenience in making know his power & goodness. If they did their conduct was treacherous & wicked: for then they converted his goodness & their benefit into snares & traps for him. But it is probable they imputed his desire of concealment merely to his modesty, & thought themselves not only at liberty, but in gratitude obliged to publish his kindness to the world. For that they intended to do him honour by the publication is very apparent I think from the method in which they mentioned the circu instance - He hath done all things well: he maketh both the deaf to hear & the dumb to speak

A generous friend may not wish to have his favours published; & yet the person on whom they are confered, may find the sentiments of gratitude too strong to be suppressed. In this light the old writers on this subject have considered it the conduct of these people; & they have pointed out to our observation, the prudent care our Ld took to obviate all suspicions of pride & popularity, & the grateful sense the people shewed for favours conferred; not say they from a contempt of his orders, but because they could not suppress the effusions of their honest zeal & gratitude. It is more than probable that these observations are rightly made

These people had brought the distressed object of their care to Xt, in full confidence that his compassion would induce him to relieve the man from his affliction. Their faith did not go unrewarded. He who made the ear & formed the tongue, gave hearing to the one & speach to the other. The astonished friends cry out he hath done all things well &c Could they designedly now convert this act of goodness into a snare to the divine author? Could the those ears which then began to hear, & that tongue which then began to articulate, could they be first employed to bring mischief on the generous head to whom the powers of hearing & speach were owing? Their honest Zeal may have prompted them to say more than they ought to have done, but under their circumstances it does not appear possible, they could have intended mischief. It was observed that the antient writers, from the example of these people, endeavoured to impress upon Xns the reasonableness of gratitude & praise to Al:m G. for his numberless mercies; & the propriety of declaring to the World the great things he hath done for us, that his goodness may be known unto men & his praise become glorious. If we consider only our temporal state, the good things his providence furnishes for our support — the comforts & conveniences of our present life, we shall have abundant reason to proclaim with the H Psalmist G-s tender mercies are over all his works

The most miserable have some mercies to lay in the balance against the weight of their afflictions, & for which they ought be thankful & to bleſs the name of their G. Indeed the very afflictions if duely considered & improved are a real subject of thanksgiving & praise to that G— whose rod is the rod of mercy, & who never afflicts but with the kindest intentions. But if we turn our attention, to our spiritual state & consider our redemption from sin & death & the Devil; the bleſsings provided for us in G's H. J., the comfort of publick & social worship, of his word & sacraments, the power of his grace & holy sp.— the heavenly inheritance he has promised & aſsured to us, (when the bright morning of the resurrection shall wake his faithful servants, from the sleep of death, to life & immortality, dumb indeed shall we be & beyond the power of a miracle to relieve us, if our voice burst not forth, in praising G. for his goodness & declaring the wonders he hath done for the children of men — satisfying the empty soul, & filling the hungry soul with goodness — even such as sit in darkness & the shadow of death; fast bound in misery & the iron chains of sin & damnation.

How to express ourselves in celebrating the praises of our G. we can be at no loss. The Bible abounds with the rapturous expressions of devout & inspired men, when pouring forth from the mouth the gratitude of their hearts, in ardent praise to their all bountiful Creator, for the wonders of his providence & grace. The book of psalms in particular runs in this strain. A great if not the greater part containing the praises of G. & being employed in magnifying him for his mercy to the inhabitants of the World, for his grace & truth to his Ch, & for the deliverances of his faithful servants & people from particular troubles, or from the enemies of their temporal & eternal happiness.

It is our particular comfort & blessing that the wisdom of the Ch hath adopted many of the inspired hymns of devout men, & the whole book of psalms into her publick service. In the use of them my friends, we are sure of expressing our adoration & prayers

& praises in sentiments agreeable to the will of G. for they came from the H. Sp. of G. & by his providence have been recorded, & conveyed down to us, for our use & instruction. We are not left to the guidance of frail men to have our prayers tinctured by their ~~own~~ passions or warped by any errors which they may have imbibed. But we address our praises to G. & our Red.r in those expressions which H. Men ~~ha~~ have uttered as they were inspired by G. And every person will find, that if he keep his mind in the use of them, they will raise his affections, they will excite his gratitude, & they will call forth his devotion, beyond any other scheme of devotion that was ever invented.

But to receive benefit from these

publick offices we must join in them. Merely to hear is doing nothing - hearing prayer or praises without joining openly in them, with responses where proper & at other times with a hearty Amen, is of all absurdities the greatest.. Barely to hear the prayers & praises of G. is no more praying to & praising G - than hearing a sermon is preaching. I know well enough the excuse that is made, that if our heart be with the prayer it is all that is required: It is not improper to remark here - that our best way of knowing the will of G. & how we shall make ourselves acceptable to him, is by consulting the bible, where if we have not an absolute precept on the subject, we shall almost always find examples that may direct in what we want to know. Let us turn then to this sacred volume, & we shall find that G— expressly enjoined it on his people the Jews, to join with their voice in his praise & adoration — we shall find that this was the constant practise of their publick meetings — & we shall also find that it was the general custom of all their great & good Men.

Indeed the man who comes to church & keeps his mouth shut through the whole service, may be more properly ~~be~~ said to mock G— than to praise him — he professes to do what he does not, he comes professing to worship G— but he is silent & dumb ~~at the altar~~. Be it our care then b b, to constantly join in the prayers & praises of the Xt, with hearts devoutly, with understand

-ings ~~cheerfully~~ joyfull & with the voice cheerfully, nothing doubting the approbation & acceptan of our H. F. —

And here it may be noticed, that as the psalms & hymns are musical compositions, & were set to music & sung in the publick worship; so there is a great congruity between praise & the melody of the voice, especially when many voices are joined; for then only does the worship of the Ch on earth resemble that in heaven, when the voices of the congregation are like the voice of many waters.

Reading in one unvaried tone, cannot express the rapturous sensations of the heart, exulting in the praises of G— it will pursue the dictates of nature & call in the powers of music ~~&~~ to express & proclaim its gratitude & delight in praising the author of its life & happiness. For this reason the x+ of G— in every period has+ directed the praises of G— to be celebrated in musical harmony, instrumental & vocal, when the circumstances of the congregation would admit of its being done. In conformity therefore to the sense of the x+ & to the dictates of the human heart, stands the custom of the singing & chaunting ~~of~~ in our publick worship (a custom which some of this congregation have of late endeavoured to improve; & with pleasure I make the remark that they have improved it — & I flatter myself, that time

& your devout endeavours my bbr. will bring that part of our service to a pleasing degree of perfection, so that the praises of G. may be sung with gratitude & devotion, & with a ready mind & cheerful voice – Lustily & with good courage. Then shall this part of Xts Xt militant, accord with the triumphant brethren in heaven & in the voice of melody ascribe – glory & honor & power, thanksgiving & praise, to the Ld G – Alm. & to the Lamb forevermore –

I have been led into this digression further then was at first intended. Some other reflections which the text would suggest may therefore be omitted. But there is one which the subject of praise to G – so naturally brings to our view that I cannot willingly pass by it. It is not uncommon for people in the distress of sickness, when they apprehend themselves to be in danger of death, to desire the prayers of the Xp to G– in the behalf & it is much to be wished that this was more practised than it is. But among those who do attend to it, few upon their recovery obey the direction of the Xp in making publick their praise & thanksgiving to G. for his goodness. The tribute of praise to G– for his mercy & goodness in delivering us from pain & sickness, from sorrow & danger is so natural to the human heart, & so agreeable to the Xan character, that it is hard to conceive how any serious person can neglect it —

(There is so much propriety, when G- ha
heard the prayers of his ++ in our behalf &
had delivered us from our distress, in celebratin
his goodness, & praising his holy name for hi
mercy & kindness in the same publick man-
-ner, that it is strange it should ever be ~~om~~
omitted —)   But finally bb, let us al
learn from the circumstances of this stor
to copy the conduct of our b R - & avoid all
ostentation & vanity - & let the conduct too
of those grateful people whose friend he had
relieved, teach us to publish our grateful
praises for the mercies we receive at his
hand, both of providence & grace throug
J Xt our Ld —

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06 Of St Luke VI 36

Be ye therefore merciful as your Father also is merciful —

That Xty abounds with precepts of love & benevolence needs not to be proved by particular quotations. The Bible is filled with them; & he must be a careless reader indeed who passes them over without particular notice. The precepts of this kind which our Saviour has caused to be recorded are so strongly expressed & contain such particular directions for the right discharge of this duty, that it must be very much our own fault, if we are at any loss concerning it's nature & extent, or the necessity there is on us constantly & ~~faifully~~ faithfully to regard it, if we would approve ourselves his sincere disciples. The h Apos too, deeply impressed with the necessity of these divine tempers, have spoken of it in terms as though every other moral duty was insignificant without it. St John & St Paul & St Peter & James have all declared with united testimony the excellency & necessity of love & charity. And St James calls the law of love & charity, the royal law, on account of its pre-eminence & extent; pervading all situations & extending to all circumstances, by which our neighbour — any person that comes within our reach, may be affected. And says that the breach of it in any one particular is a breach of the whole law of love. For this law of love forbiding all kinds of injuries to our neighbour if we ~~[illegible]~~ injury him, be it in any way it may, it is a breach of that law which says Thou shalt love thy neighbour as ~~[illegible]~~ thyself. The love of ourselves prevents our designedly doing ourselves any injury & excites us to do those things by which we may be benefited. And the love of our neighbour if we be really governed by it, will prevent our doing him any injury, & will excite us to do him all good offices. In this light too St Paul considers this law of love. He speaks of love as a debt which we owe to all men, & which we ought honestly to pay; Owe no man any thing but to love one another. For this, this law, thou shalt not commit adultery, & this thou shalt not kill, steal, bear false witness, covet & all other commands, restraining us from injuring our neighbour are all comprehended in this saying Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thyself.

Our b. Saviour not only enjoined this duty by his own authority, but he extended it's obligation beyond what any other law ever did — A new Comm.t give I unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you that ye also love one another. (St J. 13, 34.) : Only ask how Xt hath loved us, & we shall see in what respect this is a new commandment. To love one another was no new comm.t — so much the old Philosophers had discovered by the light of reason & conscience or else it was the remains of the original revelation of G. to Man. But let them come at it as they might, they acknowledged its reasonableness, & extended its obligations so far as to enjoin it on their scholars, to do to others what they wished others to do to them

Nor was, to love our Neighbour a new comm.t as it respected the Jews, for to do so is an express precept in the law of Moses (Lev. 18.18) But Xt loved us so that he layed down his life for us- Not because we deserved it of him- Nor because he could receive any advantage from it, but from pure affection to us, that he might deliver us from the curse of sin & death & obtain eternal salvation for us. In this respect this is a new comm.t never before given to man, nor required of him

That we should love one another even to the death of the body for their benefit - ie to promote, or secure their souls good, their everlasting salvation. For this is the love with which Xt requires us to love one another, even as he hath loved us. And in this sense this h. Ap St Jn certainly understood this command, for in this sense he enjoined it on those to whom he wrote. *Hereby perceive we the love of G-* because he hath laid down his life *for us*: & we ought to lay down our lives for the bret*hren*. Nor did this holy Ap barely teach this duty of loving one another to the death, but ~~in~~ he has as well as his fellow Aps carried fully into practice, & litterally laid down their lives for the spiritual good of the brethren, in the confirmation of the truth of the Gospel they preached, & in obedience to the will of their H J, who called them to the patient endurance of sufferings & death for the testimony of J-

& the love of sinners for J— sake —

After what has been said upon the na & extent of the duty of loving one another you will not be surprised at the command of the text Be ye merciful &c Mercy is but a branch of the duty of loving one another — & is indeed only a sprout from the divine root of Xtn charity. That love which requires & teaches us to do all good to our neighbour, will assuredly teach us to be merciful to him when he is in our power. Our L— had given several directions concerning the exercise of that love which he requires from his servants to one another— That they love, not only their friends but their enemies, That they return kindness for hatred, blessings for curses, prayers & good wishes for despiteful treatment. To submit to violence, rather than return it by violence a-

-gain, or seek redress from the civil magistrate for insupportable injuries. To give to every necessitous person who asks relief of us, & not to contend for what is by violence taken from us, so as destroy the sp. of charity by quarrels & contentions, but to do to all Men as we would wish they in the same circumstances would do to us — And he adds this reason, that if we only love those that love us, do good to them who do good to us, & lend to them from whom we expect to receive full value in return, there is no great merit or virtue in it — sinners, wicked men will do as much as this — but if we would approve ourselves to G— & hope for reward from him, we must love our enemies & be ready to do them good, to lend to them in their necessity, even when we have no prospect of a return to our kindness; so shall we show ourselves to be the children of the highest — for he is kind to the unthankful & to the evil upon this follows the text Be ye merciful as &c. i.e., if ye would approve yourselves to be indeed the children of ~~the highest~~ your h F, imitate his goodness, Be mercifull to your enemies as well as friends, for he is kind to the unthankful & to the evil — Do good to those who hate you as well as those who love you, for he causeth his sun to rise on the evil as well as on the good & sendeth rain on the unjust as ~~as~~ well as the just. The imitation of G's mercy therefore is required of us in the manner & extent, not in the degree & perfection of it. No creature can have that perfection of mercy which is in G. But we may extend our mercy & kindness to enemies as well as friends to overlook their offences against us, & instead of revenging ourselves return good offices for injuries they do us — Our blessed Master then proceeds to mention two or three instances in which this mercifull disposition is particularly exercised — *Judge* not unmercifully & ye shall have mercy in judgement with G— — *Condemn not*, hastily, rashly & cruelly, *& ye shall not be condemned* — forgive others, their trespasses against you, *& ye shall be forgiven* your trespasses against G— Give to the needy & necessitous, & from the poor & helpless man who would borrow of thee, turn not away, & *it shall be given to you again of G*— May your fellow men, by G's, disposal shall make up to you these overflowings of your your bounty & Charity; & in their dealings with you, shall give you *good measure pressed down & ~~sh~~ shaken together & running over*: *For with the same measure you mete withal, it shall be measured to you again*: or in other words, as your dealings with others is liberal & merciful, or stingy & cruel, so shall you be dealt with by G— & by Man

The liberal soul (says Soloman) shall be made fat, & he that watereth shall be watered also himself. We have also the testimony ~~of the testimony~~ of the evangelical prophet Isaiah — The churle, the morose, stingy ilnatured person, deviseth wicked devises to destroy the poor, but the liberal soul deviseth liberal things & by liberal things he stand. What has been said will let us fully into the expression of St Matt. in the place parallel to the text — Be ye therefore perfect as &c Not that any mortal man can attain to the perfection of G— the h. T— Nor is it his duty to aim at it. But he can through the operations of the h Ghost obtain that divine benignity of heart which will enable him to love his enemies, to bleſs them that curse him, to do good to them that hate him & pray for them that dispitefully use him & persecute him: And he may poſseſs this temper to such a degree as to submit his life to death to promote their spiritual & eternal welfare. This is the perfection of mercy & love. It is impoſsible to go beyond it. And in this sense it is that our Saviour calls upon us to be perfect as our F which is in heaven is perfect – & which St Luke in the text expresses Be ye merciful &c everything short of this is partial love & mercy – this is the absolute perfection of both. It is worth our consideration whether this be not the true perfection of our nature? whether there be any other at which we can arrive? Indeed whether this does not include all others. We are astonished at the omnipotency of G— & we tremble at his justice: But goodness & loving-kindness & mercy, his opening the door of salvation in the remission of sins to the contrite penitent, through the blood of J— renders him the object of our warmest love & most greatful adoration. He calls us too, to the imitation of his love & mercy to us, in dealings & intercourse with each other;—& enforces his call by this powerful & tender motive, That we may be his children who is infinite in mercy & love. To be the children of G— means to be like him in temper & disposition. In nothing else can we be like him

We cannot resemble him in his power & majesty & wisdom & justice & other astonishing perfections, because they are above our nature. True indeed, we are commanded to be holy, not as G. is holy, but because he is holy. But we are commandd to be perfect in mercy & love as our F— in h— is perfect. The perfection of mercy & love is the true perfection of our nature, & gives us the highest poſsible resemblance to our all gracious Creator. Our b Sav & h Aps have informed us too, that our capacity for heavenly happineſs must arise from this benigne & merciful disposition. To give but one instance from St Paul, speaking of the three great Xan virtues faith, hope & charity, he gives the preference to the last in such strong terms as incontestibly set out the preeminency of charity or love above them both.

Be persuaded then my b b

to consider & comply with this injunction
of your S— It will cut of one great source of
of contention in this world – & thereby make
your situation & lives much more easy &
quiet – & it will make you the children of
your F— who is in heaven – the of his love
– & the heirs of heavenly happiness

Hebrews X. 14

For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified

The subject which the h Ap. is pursuing, is the superiority of the Xan. over the Mosaic system— For several chapters back he had considered this superiority under different circumstances. Faith the grand pillar of all religion, when considered as it respected the patriarchs under the law, their faith in fact ~~rested~~ rested on the Xan system, for they all copied the faith of Abraham, whose faith rested in Xt — Even he rejoiced to see his day & he saw & was glad

Another circumstance which evinced the superiority of the Xan over the Mosaick system was, the difference between the Priesthood. Under the law, Men, of like passions & partaking of the common infirmity were appointed as intercessors & mediators between G— & Man — & very often expiating the sins of the people, while they themselves were guilty of those very sins they were making attonement for — But J Xt, being free from sin himself became a proper & suitable person to make an acceptable propitiation for sin — For such an high priest became us who is holy, harmless, undefiled separate from sinners & made higher than the heavens— who needeth not daily as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice ~~for~~ first for ~~himself~~ his own sins & then of the people—

Another circumstance which evinced the superiority of the Xan over the Jewish oeconomy was, the difference between the sacrifices used ~~on~~ for the purpose of expiating sin. Under the Jewish law, the blo of different animals, ~~were~~ was shed, rather as a memorial of sin, than as a propitiation for sins, for as the Ap. observes it is not possible that the blood of Bulls & of Goats should take away sins— The law having a shadow of good things to come & not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually, make the comers thereunto perfect — but in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year — But this man Xt J after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of G— For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified In other words

The Mosaical law which contained no more than an imperfect shadow or rude first draught of those mercies made over to us by the Gospel — & not the lively effigies or representation of them such as G— now affords us — is no way able by sacrifices every year as long as the temple lasts, to work that great benefit for the worshippers which the Gospel is designed to do viz to give men full pardon for sin & purifie the conscience — But Xt J— having by his own death made one complete sacrifice, which will suffice for the sins of all the world without need of repeating it (sealing to all that shall ever live a covenant of mercy & remission upon repentance) hath ever since continued at the right hand of G. & shall do so for ever. For continues the Ap. in the text For by one offering, he hath perfected ~~them~~ for ever them that are sanctified — There is no farther necessity of the high priests entering year by year the ~~most~~ holy of holies, nor of offering up new sacrifices; the one sacrifice of J Xt hath completed, perfected & finished the redemption of all mankind; & all those will confide in the efficacy of this attonement shall receive remission of sins & eternal happiness —

From this explanation of the text there will arise two inquiries worthy of our attention at this time — The first is —

In what consisted the sacrifice of Xt —
& secondly, what are the benefits we receive
thereby

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St Luke 14 – 24

For I say unto you, that none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper

Our B. S. being invited by a pharisee of chief note, to dine with him, & observing how anxious ~~they~~ the Guests were to gain the most honourable seats, gave them a lesson of modesty & humility; directing them to be so far from contending for the highest seats, as to be contented with the lowest, & observed, that if they happened to be seated below their dignity, the good-manners of the master of the table would direct a higher seat for them. He took also this occasion to correct something he saw amiss in the conduct of the person who had invited him. This reproof consists in a direction that when he made a feast, he should not invite his friends & relations & rich neighbours, who by inviting him again would make a compensation; but the poor & lame & blind – the objects of mercy & charity, because they could not make him any recompense; but that he should be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.

It is well to observe here that the translation of our Bible is rather stronger than the original Greek; owing to the different mode of expression in the two languages. There is in this speech of our S– no prohibition against a mans inviting his relations & rich neighbours to an entertainment; nor is the Xian system an enemy to the harmony of family connections, or the intercourse of ci-

-vility & friendship, but on the contrary a fiend to them all. But the prohibition lies against inviting, for the sake of ostentation & pomp, & against the neglect of the poor & friendless. Nor does the direction to invite the poor & lame & blind, necessarily imply that they should be seated with you at your tables; but simply, that hospitality ~~be attended to~~ be exercised towards them, their wants attended to, & they treated with humanity & kindness. (England & Sherlock

Upon our B. R. telling him, he should be recompensed at the resurrection of the just - One of the Guests cried out - Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of G- By the kingdom of G- the Jews ~~&~~ always meant the kingdom or reign of the Messiah, which they expected to be a glorious temporal state ——

This mans remark gave occasion to J.C. to speak the parable of which the text is the conclusion; to intimate to him that the Jews would be so far from enjoying the blessings of the Messiahs kingdom, be those blessings what they might, that on account of their unbelief & impenitency they would generally be rejected from it. The parable begins thus — *A certain man made a great supper & bade many.* In the parallel place of St Matt. it is said, a certain King made a marriage feast for his son —

This man or king, represents Alm. G — his son, our S. J. Xt who is often described as the Spouse of the Chh. & the Chh is called his bride — His marriage represents his coming to redeem & call & establish his Chh, & take her to himself as his own peculiar inheritance — his bride, his body, his flesh & bones — for according to the original institution of marriage which represents the mystical union between Xt & his Chh, — they twain shall be one flesh

~~And~~ The marriage feast or great supper represents the blessings & spiritual pleasures of the Messiahs kingdom – not those things wh. satiate & fatten the body, but which delight the mind & refresh the soul. These blessing & priviledges had always been represented by the prophets, by those things which delight & please the body, because it is impossible to speake of spiritual things but by analogy to our bodily senses. Isaiah has expressly described the blessings & enjoyments of this happy state, by the similitude of a rich feast – And in this mountain shall the L. of Hts. make unto all people, a feast of fat things, a feast of wine on the lees, of fat things full of marrow – of wines on the lees well refined –

And he sent his servants at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come for all things are now ready – This I suppose to represent the first invitation to the Jews by John the Baptist. by our S. apostles & seventy [redacted] disciples, who were all sent to proclaim & invite the Jews into the kingdom of G— i.e, to attend to & [redacted] receive the Messiah now come, that they might be partakers of the blessings & priveleges of ~~the~~ his reign, the marriage feast, the feast of fat things on G's holy mountain.

And they all with one [redacted] consent began to ~~make themselves~~ One had bought a farm; another a parcel of Cattle, & a third had married a wife. They were all busied in worldly cares & pleasure & could not attend to spiritual blessings.

When the servants made report of the behaviour of those who had been invited, the Master of the house, the King, was angry at the affront that had been put upon him.

So G. was displeased that they who had been so lovingly called & invited, should so, undecently & unthankfully refuse to come. St Matt: says. the king sent out his armies & distroyed them & burnt up their city. This relates to that dreadful distruction which G— brought on the impenitent Jews, by the Roman armies. The Romans were a savage, haughty & vindictive enemy, & seem to have been raised up by G— to be the executioners of his wrath against a wicked & irreclaimable world, & to reduce all nations of the earth to obedience to one government, thereby to prepare a free communication for the religion of Xt in it

Go quickly said the angry Master into the streets & lanes of the City, & bring in ~~hi~~ hither the poor & maimed the halt & the ~~bl~~ blind. This relates to the commission & direction given by our S— to his Apostles after his resurrection to be witnesses to him in Jerusalem & Judea & Samaria & unto the Jews of the dispersion to the uttermost parts of the earth (Acts 1–8) These are ~~[illegible]~~ the poor & the maimed & the halt & the blind — in a general way such as were rejected & despised by their haughty countrymen —

His servants having informed him that they had done as he had commanded them & that there was yet room for more guests; the Ld, said — Go into the highways & hedges, & compel them to come in that my house may be filled. This circumstance evidently relates to the mission of the Aps, to the Gentile world — first made known to St Peter in the vision of the sheet let down from heaven filled with those animals which the Jews held as unclean; & which Peter was directed to use for food, & when he objected on account of their being unclean, he was ~~ca~~ cautioned against calling any thing uncle

-an which G— had cleansed. This he interpreted of going to the Gentiles & preaching to them whom the Jews looked as unclean to be conversed with, as swine or any forbidden animal was to be eaten. Accordingly he went without hesitation to the Gentile Cornelius who at the command of G— had sent for him, & preached to him & his company, which before he had thought it unlawful for him to do. And the descent of the Hl Gt. on those Gentiles to whom he preached, was a demonstration of his having rightly interpreted the vision — The same thing was revealed to St Paul in his vision in the Temple when it was said to him — *Go thy way for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles*

But this commission was not carried into full execution, till at the command of the Hl Gt— Barnabas & Paul were set apart for this very work by the Chh of Antioch.

Then indeed they went forth into the highways & hedges to all the Gentile, nations & compelled, earnestly persuaded, vehemently urged them to come to this supper of the Lamb: to enter into the kingdom of Xt, Messiah & become partakers of its priviledges & blessings, that the Chh of G. the kingdom of Messiah might be filled with all mankind—

I have interpreted the word compel used in our Bible, by, earnestly persuaded, for in truth it means no more than the force of persuasion. Some, it is true have quoted this text to justify compelling men by f[illegible] fines & imprisonment, to become Xans, just as the Mahometans compel men by the sword to embrace to religion of Mahomed. But the mind of Man is superior to all force & compulsion — human laws cannot reach it — they may make the feet & the hands & the tongue obey them, but the mind is out of their reach — & they can no more compel a man to be a Xan, than they can compel him to relish a dish of food from which he has an aversion —

Some ~~ag~~ Xan sects again, have pressed this text into their service, to justify that persecution, by which they have endeavoured to compel all who differed from them, to embrace their tenets. But as this spirit has more of malice than love, of persecution than Xty; its has ever been to make those against whom it was exerted, their enemies instead of their friends —

Another set of men have tried hard, to bring this text to support the doctrine of the irresistable compulsion of the Sp. of G- in the work of conversion, without considering that the word is not used in respect of G-. but in respect of those servants whom the Ld sent out into the highways & hedges to bring men into his Chh— If they were brought in by force whether they would or would not, the man whom St Matt. mentions, was hardly dealt ~~with~~ in being punished for not having on a wedding garment They who brought him in by force, were to blame for not furnishing him with a proper dress—

The text is the conclusion of the parable, & contains the determination of the master of the House— None of those men who were bidden & refused to come, shall taste of my supper— shall enjoy any of the blessings & priviledges of my kingdom. How exactly this determination was fulfilled, history & our own observation inform us. The Jews continued obstinate in their unbelief & impenitency

But few & they generally of the inferior class, denoted in the parable by the poor & halt & blind believed on Xt. The leaders of the people the Rulers & Scribes & Pharisees with the bulk of the nation rejected him. They would not have him to reign over them. They would not enter in to the marriage feast — i e, they would not enter in to his Chh, nor become subjects in his kingdom; & they were excluded from its blessings & protection

They were given up to the lusts of their own heart, till they had filled up the measure of their iniquity, by crucifying their King Messiah, & persecuting & murdering his subjects — And then they were given up to the will of their enemies. G— sent forth his armies who took & destroyed their Cty; & scattered those of them who survived the slaughter, through the world

And they still continue scattered & wandering on the face of the earth, despised of men

& apparently neglected of G— . And thus D. Revelation informs us they shall continue untill their repentance reconcile them to his mercy. Then shall they again become objects of his favour, & be called in to partake with the Gentiles in all the blessings of redeeming love. Their present state is however a standing & incontestable miracle to prove the truth of Xts religion. Every thing that has happened to them was particularly foretold; & we now see with eyes how evry thing that was fortold continues yet to be fulfilled. Their being scattered among all nations, & yet continuing a distinct people is what never happened to any other nation & can only be owing to the particular interposition of G's providence; & shews that G— has farther views concerning them; probable by their conversion to revive the belief & practise of real Xanity among the

~~Gentile Land— And may G— hasten the happy period when they with us & we with them may become one fold under one Shepherd J. Xt our S— & R—.~~

Many reflections arising from the subject before us, will deserve our attention, but we must reserve them for another opportunity—

At present we rest in the hope that our H F— will hasten the blessed period, when Jews Gentiles shall form one fold, under that one shepherd J. Xt our Lord—

[illegible]

fulfilled — Their [illegible]

[illegible] terms, to agree conformably [illegible]

[illegible] what reason they formed it any other [illegible]

It can only be owing to the particular situ-

position of the provinces & where the G-

[illegible] as yet [illegible] concerning them, [illegible]

able by their [illegible] to move the [illegible]

[illegible] among the

In the forenoon I considered the occasion & meaning of the parable of which the text is the conclusion. It appears in its original construction it was intended to represent & vindicate the propriety of G's rejecting his old people the Jewish nation, on account of their obstinacy & infidelity; & of his calling in the Gentiles to take their place in the Chh. or Kingdom of the Messiah, There are several things relating to the subject which nearly concern us b b, as Xans, & which neither the time, nor the connection of the discourse would suffer me then to attend. Permit me now therefore to lay them before you ——

After what was said in the former discourse, the first & most obviouse ~~rem~~ remark is, the goodness of A G in preparing so bountifully for his people the rich repast of the marriage supper, by which are signified - the bleſsings of Xts redemption. These bleſsings are the free remiſsion of past sins, peace with G- the gifts & graces of his H.Sp. resurrection from death & eternal life. How fitly these bleſsings are represented by a rich repast, your own sense will readily perceive. The design of a feast is to delight & refresh the body, to exhilarate the mind, & promote mutual love & benevolence among the guests. Only transfer these effects from the body to the soul & you will come at the true spiritual meaning of this figure.

The soul oppreſsed with the weight of sin, is in the same state with the body worn down by labour & fatigue: And as that is refreshed & strengthened & again made fit for action by rest & wholesome food - so is the soul by the sense of the peace & forgiveneſs of G— As the man body & mind, is exhilerated by the wine of an entertainment— so is the soul exhilerated by the influences & opperations of the b. Sp. of G— & by the precious promises of resurrection from death, & eternal happiness in heaven. As mutual love & benevolence are promoted among the guests ~~of~~ by the harmony & delight of the entertainment— so is spiritual love & fellowship & charity promoted & increased among the faithful servants of G— in his H Chh. by the common sense of the inestimable blessings they all receive from him the fountain of all blessedness —— Well might Isaiah cry out in prophetic rapture when contemplating by the Sp. these scenes of spiritual bliss & delight— *And in this mountain shall the Ld of Hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wine on the lees, of fat things full of Mar*

-row of wine on the lees well refined—

This prophetic discription was fulfilled when the Son of G— king Messiah came into the World & espoused the Chh. to himself proclaiming pardon & peace & reconciliation with G— the gift of the H Sp of G— [redacted], the resurrection from the dead & the life everlasting. When all these blessings were ready for man to partake of— he sent forth his servants to the children of the kingdom to inform them that the feast of fat things on G's holy mountain, all the blessings of Messiah were ready for their acceptance— Behold I have prepared my ~~dinne~~ dinner, my Oxen, & my fatlings are killed, & all things are ready— come unto the Marriage

2d The second thing I shall remark is

the great contempt & neglect which the Jews the covenanted people of G— to whom the first invitation to the heavenly feast was given, shewed, when they were so lovingly called of G— to be partakers in the rich treasures of his grace. They are represented by the persons who excused themselves on account of busineſs or pleasure.

And it is worthy of notice that the busineſs & pleasure in which they were engaged, were all lawful & commendable, & then only became culpable when they were pursued to the neglect of spiritual bleſsings.

They preferred good bargains in land & in Cattle & the pleasures of wedlock to all the bleſ of redemption. It was to correct this temper of preferring worldly gain & pleasure to the service of G— that our S— added at the end of the parable an observation that ought to sink deep into our hearts — If any man come to me, & hate not his Father & Mother & his Wife & children & brethren & sisters, yea & his own life also — he cannot be my disciple

Now to love all these is natural & our duty, & in loving them we fulfill the will & commandment of G— But we are to love G— above them all — & comparatively speaking we are to hate them when they tempt us to abandon his fear & service — How this mark of the Xn character is regarded every mans own conscience can best inform him. But guiltless he cannot be who prefers his gain to his G— or his relations to his S— or the pleasures of the world to the blessings of Redemption. (Duty therefore requires b.b. that we attend to our hearts & to our practice & see that we take not our religion on worldly motives, because it may promote our business or assist our ambitious motives.

or gratify our pleasures, because if we do, we to have our reward in this world & are to expect no other. For if we let any worldly motive hinder us from embracing Xts religion we fall under the condemnation of those, who prefered their farm & their oxen, to the marriage feast of the Son of G- the great King -

3dly The third remark I shall make, respects the goodness of A G- in repeating his kind invitation to the Jews after they had so basely & wickedly rejected his profered love

It was observed in the former discourse that the first invitation respected the ministry of St John Baptist, of Xt. his Aps. & seventy disciples. This invitation to receive the Messiah & enter into his kingdom, the nation not only rejected on worldly & base motives, but their rulers & Priests & great men conceived the utmost malice against the meek & humble

G— because he affected not temporal power —but called his followers to renounce the pride & pomp of life, the pleasures of vice & sensuality & seek reconciliation with G— by repentance & faith in his mediation: And they carried their malice to the highest degree, even to Death & that the worst of deaths that could befall an innocent person— by false accusations making him the victim of legal justice— to die the death of a malefactor— thereby destroying as far as they were able, his character as well as his life. Though angry at their conduct G— did not cast them off

The meek sufferer rose again to life, & was so far from harbouring resentment against his murderers that he renewed his invitation to them, sending again his Apos with new & more pressing orders to go into the streets & lanes of the City & bring into his house; the poor & maimed & halt & blind to partake of his supper. As the first invitation was rejected by the rulers & great men of the nation, this should be made to all individually in their seperate capacities—excluding no order nor rank, nor degree, not even the poorest, though halt, & blind. All were invited to come into Xts Chh, to partake of the blessings of his redemption. Many accepted the invitatio & were generally received to the full enjoyment of G's, grace given to the World thro' Xt— This second invitation was made by the Aps after our Lds— ascention & it was not till the rulers & people at large had again rejected their message & persecuted & driven them out from Judea into the

Roman empire that the sentence of exclusion paſsed against them. Then indeed G- determined that none of those who were bidden & refused to come should tast of his supper - should enjoy the bleſsings of Meſsiahs kingdom; & they were given up to follow the dictates of their own corrupt & impenitent hearts, untill they had made themselves ripe for distruction - & the Roman armies, the executioners of G's vengeance, distroyed them & burnt up their City -

4ly Let it be remarked that when the sentence of rejection paſsed against the Jews that they should no longer be the peculiar people of G - the commiſsion of the Aps. to baptise all nations took place & they went into the high-ways & hedges - to the heathen nations & brought them in that G's house - his Chh might be filled - & that vacan-

-cy which had been made in it by the rejection of the Jews, might be supplied by the calling in of the Gentiles. And in this place it will be well to note, that G— has ever had his peculiar family or Chh. in the World—

The family of Seth were the Sons or children of G— maintaining his worship & obeying his commands — till being corrupted by associating with the wicked descendants of reprobate Cain — the World became ripe for distruction & G— swept them away by a flood — preserving Noah, a descendant of Seth with his family —— In him the Chh. was continued after the flood, till falling into idolatry G— called Abraham to be his chosen servant & his descendants to be his peculiar people & Chh, & under a particular oeconomy they so continued till the coming of the Messiah the hope & expectations of the nations when on account of their obstinate impenitency & rejection of the Son of G- they were cast off & the gracious will of G- chose the Gentiles were called in to supply their place. When it is said the Gentiles were called in, it is not meant the whole body of them indiscriminately, but those of them who accepted the invitation, & were baptized in the name of the H. T- that as the Chh was before confined to one family, so now it should be collected out of all nations - & none should be refused on account of their nation. but high & low, rich & poor, bond or free, who believed & were baptised, should be saved -

We then my b. la have come into the Chh of G- in the room of his ~~antient~~ old people the Jews, & stand now in the same relation to G- that of people in covenant with him that they did - & stand too on the same ground that they did - the ground of faith & obedience

— That we continue stedfast in his worship & in the doctrines & practise of his holy religion

If we depart from his worship or corrupt the essential doctrines of this religion, or lead wicked & impenitent lives under it — what reason is there why G— should not cast us of as he did the Jews — G— is the same he ever was & governs the world by the same maxims of Justice & Righteousness he ever did. In the revelation of St John the last book of the scriptures that was written — there are admonitions sent to the Chhs of Asia, reproving them for corrupting the purity of the Xan faith & practice, & threatening them unless they repented & returned to the truth as they had first received it, G— would remove their candlestick out of its place, that is, would take from them the heavenly light of the Gospel of peace

It is ever to be regretted that the admonitions of G— have so little effect upon those to whom they are directed. The Chhs unreclaimed by the warning, fell at last under the threatening

The armies of Mahomed broke in upon them & removed their candlestick, fixing the delusion of Mahometanism in its stead.

And under their thraldom the surviving few continue to this day; with the additional mortification to their slavery, of seeing those Chhs which were consecrated to the worship of their Sav. profaned by the adoration of a daring impostor —

Be it then our care to learn wisdom & take warning from the errors & misfortunes of others, & as we have received the true Xty, both in Faith & ~~Go~~ Government & practice, in that branch of Xts Chh, of which we are members, to maintain & keep the same in the unity of the Sp. in the bond of peace & in righteousness of life —

The parable relates I suppose to the whole community of Xt Chh, & not to individuals. But then it should be remembered, that Xts catholic or universal Chh, is made up of national or individual Chhs — these again of particular congregations — & again these congregations of particular members. The good or bad conduct of every member has an influence on the congregation to which he belongs — the conduct of particular congregations on the national Chh. to which they ~~to~~ belong — the conduct of national Chhs on the catholic Chh. of which it is a part. This brings the matter home to every individual, & shews that his behaviour has, in its degree an influence on the whole Chh — The Chh cannot be corrupt, but by the corruption of its members. Every member therefore who departs from the purity of the faith, or government of the true Chh of Xt, or from that holiness & righteousness of life which it enjoins & requires — as far as his influence goes, opens the door to the judgement of G — not only on himself, but the Chh of which he is a member. This consideration should lead us to attend to our ~~behav~~ behaviour not only as it affects us but as it may affect the congregation to which we belong, & through that the whole Chh of Xt— And may G— our protector & guide give us all, grace to consider these things, that belong to our peace & the peace & welfare of his Chh— that in all things we may please him who hath called out of darkness to make us partakers of the glorious light of his gospel—

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Glory be to G—

St Luke XIX - 9

And JESUS said unto him — This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham —

The text is ~~[illegible]~~ the conclusion of the story of Zacheus — which is briefly this — Our B L & Master in his journey to Jerusalem, was paſsing through a place called Jericho — his fame as usual having excited the attention of the people, a vast concourse ~~of people~~ was drawn togethe — & among this multitude, there was a man whose name was Zacheus, a publican or Roman taxgatherer — & being the head of that claſs of people, he was very rich — this on ~~being~~ was very desirous to see what sort of a per

-son ~~the~~ [illegible] J- was - & withal being very short of stature, was obliged to have recourse to climbing into a Sycamore tree to gratify his curiosity. In this situation our Redeemer in passing by espied him - & immediately calling to him desired that he would make haste & come down [illegible] because He (& probably his Disciples with him) must that day ~~p~~ be entertained at his house - Upon this Zaccheus without further hesitation came down & with the greatest cordiality & joy received J. & his company

The Pharisees however, as usual were offended that any one should be noticed, who was less holy than they professed themselves to be - they therefore murmured at J. for visiting this man because they thought him a Sinner - but Zaccheus probably hearing this - answered in the presence of them all - Behold Ld. the half of my goods I give to the poor - & if I have taken any thing from any man by a false accu-

-sation, I restore him fourfold — hereupon the B J— declared — This day &c—

Several useful practical observations may be drawn from this short history & to them I beg your serious attention—

The first thing worthy of notice ~~is~~ is, the desire of Zaccheus to see J— The evangelist merely observes that he sought to see who J— was, or what short of a man he was — But it is highly probable that he with the rest of his nation was looking for & expecting the Messiah — for it certain that the Jewish nation were at that time in great expectation of the coming of Xt — & for this very reason the ~~J—~~ Sanhedrim or great eclesiastical counsel of the nation sent a deputation to John Baptist, to know whether he were the Xt or not. This expectation in Zaccheus, together with the daily reports he heard of J— that he openly ~~as~~ avowed himself to be the Messiah, & wrought miracles in confirmation of his pretensions — in all probability induced him to take this pains, that he might see whether the person & conduct of J— answered the general fame of him — for if he were the Messiah he came to bring salvation to Israel

~~How~~ great is the pity that the example of Zaccheus in this respect ~~part~~ is not more imitated by those at the present day who either disbelieve or are wavering in their belief of Xty. Would they like him be but ambitious to see & examine for themselves, the Xan system, with a mind capable of being convinced — possibly to them also the H. J. would vouchsafe to ~~to~~ declare the glad tidings of salvation — To us as well as to the Jews the coming of the Messiah, brings salvation & peace — to us as well as to them, the evidences for the truth of his holy religion are sufficient if we would only patiently see & examine for ourselves — without trusting the direction of our minds in so important a matter to ~~the~~ a few bold persons who are by far more concerned to dar

-le the eyes of the World with the wit, than they are to pursue & search after truth should it chance to lie in a different path than the one they are pursuing —

When it is recollected of how great importance Xty is to every individual if it should be true; how many & weighty arguments can be brought to prove the authenticity of it — how great a part of the world have always been in the belief of it — & added to this this, that all the men in the world of the greatest learning & genius have ever been the greatest lovers & followers of it — surely these circumstances should induce a person of common capacity to give it an attentive & thorough examination. I said whole of the learned men in the world had been lovers of Xty — & the expression is not at all too strong; for though there has been of learning & genius who have dissented — yet ~~they~~ their number is so small that in comparison with the rest, they are indeed as nothing —

But alas! passion & appetite have now usurped the place of reason — & to argue against the propensities of human nature is at the present day to argue without reason —

The next thing we notice in this story is the zeal which actuated Zaccheus & which common place difficulties could not overcome — Nature had denied to ~~him~~ this man the usual hight of Men & therefore among a multitude he was prevented from gratafying his desire — ~~but still~~ determined not to be disappointed he with ~~great~~ agility ascends the Sycamore that he might without obstruction view him whom he so ardently wished to see —

How worthy of the imitation of Xans is this example — how glorious would the sight be were they as zealous in crowding to the Temple of this G— to utter his praises, to pour forth thanksgivings to his holy name & hear of all his wondrous works, as this man was merely to see his person — O that it were possible my friends to inspire with the spirit that animated him! — It is said of this man that he was very rich — & that he was chief among the Publicans — yet in this instance he depend not upon his riches nor regarded his high station — but like the lowest of the multitude clambered into a tree; & the reward he obtained is well ~~worthy~~ worthy of regard — he first, among thousands obtained the gracious promise that J— would enter his his house & dwell with him — In the midst of his enemies, when reproached & reviled as the worst of sinners — (for being a tax-gatherer ~~against his own people~~ for the Romans, they held him in the utmost abhorrence) he is permitted to stand forth openly & justify himself, & having done so — has the satisfaction to hear his justification accepted, & his pardon pronounce & himself declared to be a true son of righteous Abraham — What more could he desire? And yet b.b. all this is given to every man who with ~~a~~ true penitent heart

A lively faith ~~you~~ comes to worship at the Temple of G— — The house dedicated to his name & the devout prayers of his people offered therein G— has ever promised to accept— & the B. S— has declared that where-ever two or three are gathered together in his name he will be in the midst of them — here it is where the waters of life in a more especial manner ~~flo~~ flow— & whosoever drinketh of the waters here shall never thirst, but it shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life — — The ordinances of the Gospel are here dispensed, the prayers of the faithful are here offered up— & here supplications are made in behalf of all mankind, by the appointed Priest of G—

A long & tedious season is now bb. commencing, [redacted] — Cold & Storm & Tempest are now let loose; & nature ~~is~~ has universally [redacted] put on her most forbidding

* The ease & comfort we enjoy in this world is the gift of G— & as his gift we ought to enjoy it with gratitude when we have it, & resign it withought a murmur whenever it interferes with a decided specified duty; The satisfaction of a morning bed — the comfort of undisturbed leisure, we none of us are perhaps insensible of — & six days out of seven we are permitted to order our time as we please, for

this time is given to ~~pr~~ man to provide
for the things of this world - but the seventh
day is G- & must be spent in the service
of G- on that day the man should say to
his Soul, up & be doing, for this is the Lords
day - Away dull sloth, I will arise & go to my
F— I will shake off the things of the world,
- I will, like the beloved disciple, outrun
my companions & be first at the tem-
ple of the Lord - first to utter his praises &
hear of all his glorious deeds - ⊙

affect — but zeal to be present at the publick
worship of G— will overcome many difficulties
How often the inclemency of the weather may
interfere with the sabbath it is impossible to
say — but as often as it does I recommend to your
serious consideration the story of Zaccheus —
think of his zeal to procure a sight of the RJ —
— think how he was rewarded for his zeal — &
then determine what your conduct ought to
be — — Surely that zeal is hardly strong enough
refer a petition to the throne of Grace, that
not induce you to bear an hours cold:
bring you out a short distance during a
rn — & again, if it pleases G— to send
l weather & unpleasant walking what right
you to gain say — or refuse your attendance
a is court — you come as dependants on his
goodness, & this very weather perhaps is meant as a trial of
your faith & zeal — & be assured my friends
that your zeal for the service of your maker
will never go unrewarded * — ⊙ P for my part

this time is given to ~~pr~~ man to provide
for the things of this world — but the o
day is G— & must be spent in the o
of G— on that day the man should sa
his Soul, up & be doing, for this is th
day — Away dull sloth, I will arise & g
It — I will shake off the things of the w
— I will, like the beloved disciple, o run
my companions & be first at the tem-
ple of the Lord — first to utter his praises &
hear of all his glorious deeds — ⊙

aspect — but zeal to be present at the publick
worship of G— will overcome many difficulties
How often the inclemency of the weather may
interfere with the sabbath it is impossible to
say — but as often as it does I recommend to your
serious consideration the story of Zaccheus —
think of his zeal to procure a sight of the H.J. —
— think how he was rewarded for his zeal &
then determine what your conduct ought to
be — — Surely that zeal is hardly strong enough
to prefer a petition to the throne of Grace, that
will not induce you to bear an hours cold!
or bring you out a short distance during a
storm — & again, if it pleases G— to send
foul weather & unpleasant walking what right
have you to gain say — or refuse your attendance
at his court — you come as dependants on his
goodness, & this very weather perhaps is meant as a trial of
your faith & zeal — & be assured my friends
that your zeal for the service of your maker
will never go unrewarded* ⊙ I for my part

as long as it shall G- to give me health- shall be here— Wherefore according to mine office I bid you in the name of G- I call you in Xts behalf— I exhort you as you love your own salvation, to be attentive & diligent in your duty to your Maker & Redeemer [illegible]

Another circumstance noticeable in this history is the manner in which Zaccheus testified his repentance & ~~r~~ reformation— Lo, said he, one half of my goods I give to the poor & if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him four-fold. The Jewish Law required when any thing was taken from a man by oppression & false accusation, & voluntarily restored again —that a fifth part of the value of the ~~[illegible]~~ thing should be added to it— But Zaccheus viewing his conduct in a still more abhorrenc than even the law— determined to give up four-fold — & again the Jewish law & tradition required that a fifth part of a mans in-

-come should be given away in charitable ~~use~~ uses— but he determined to give half his property— A faith & desire for forgiveness so earnest as this could not but be acceptable in the sight of G— & one circumstance ought to be particularly noticed. ~~&~~ that is, that Zacchius has no thought of the acceptance of his repentance complete [illegible] make restitution of the

repent save unless accompanied by correspon ding good works— ~~&~~ we grant all is grounded upon faith— for that principle in the soul is like light to the eye, & air to the lungs— the eye cannot see without the light of the Sun; neither can the lungs breath without air— but destroy the eye— & ten thousand sun could not communicate one single ray of light to the body— stop the lungs & though a tempest were to blow, not a breath of air would do the body good—

letter ~~[illegible]~~ of the law —

3 But finally, the issue of Zaccheus's faith is the gracious declaration that Salvation had come to his & family — This should serve to remind us how invariably true our gracious Ld is to his word, — that those who come to him he will in no wise cast out ✗

1 Zaccheus met with revilings & persecutions in seeking the Messiah — but was blessed in the possession of him & let this remind you my Xan friends, that the misfortunes, vexations & incident common to this life, will be all swallowed up in the enjoyments of him who is to take away all your sins & heal all your infirmities

2 Zaccheus was a Sinner — he acknowledged himself to be so in the presence of Xt. & received forgiveness upon testifying the sincerity of his repentance — & so shall you also my friends if like him you come boldly to the throne of grace, & there confess & acknowledge the evil of your ways — ✗ Therefore B.B. Mark

ye, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings — — cease to do evil; Learn to do well; — & then this day shall salvation come also to you, forasmuch as you also by faith & repentance are children of righteous Abraham —

Scatotcott 1820
Ditto — 1821
Iſlip — ——

N—2, 97

John I. 34.

And I ſaw & bare record that this is the Son of God.

The holy Evangelist begins his Gospel with aſserting the divinity of the Logos, the word of God; & that he became man that he might be the Redeemer of the world. These points he establishes, first, by his own affirmation, & ſecondly by the testimony of the holy Baptist.

1. The Evangelist preſents us with his own testimony, that the word who came into the world, & was made flesh, & dwelt among us, was God; Because he was in the beginning with God — before any creature was made — He therefore could

not be a creature himſelf. Beſides; *All things were made by Him*, & *without Him was not any thing made, that was made* — *In him was life, & the life was the light of men*. He, therefore, by whom all things were made, who had life in himſelf, & gave life to men, could not be a creature, but was true, & very God.

2. The Evangelist produceth the testimony of John Baptist, a man sent of God to bear witneſs to the humanity & divinity of Christ, the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world, being that very perſon whom the Evangelist calleth the Logos — *word of God*, & who he saith, *was made flesh* & *dwelt among us*.

To the human nature of this divine perſon the Baptist bore witneſs when he called him, *The Lamb of God which taketh*

eth away the ſin of the world. To his divine nature he bore witneſs in the text, *I ſaw, & bare record, that this is the Son of God.*

The holy Baptiſt was ſent of God for two purpoſes. The firſt was, to prepare the way for the manifestation of the Son of God in human flesh. The other was, to bear witneſs to his perſon, & to point him out as it were with his finger; that all might believe in him *who taketh away the ſin of the world.*

The firſt part of his commiſsion he fulfilled by the preaching & baptiſm of repentance; ſaying to the people, That there was one among them, mightier that he was — of dignity & excellence ſuperior to him — whoſe ſhoes he was not worthy to bear, & who ſhould baptize them with the Holy Ghoſt.

The other part of his commiſsion, the bearing perſonal teſtimony to Jesus, & pointing him out as the very perſon whoſe way he was ſent to prepare, & who ſhould baptize with the Holy Ghost, we ſee fulfilled in that part of the chapter from which the text is taken. Behold, ſaid John ſeeing Jesus approach, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the ſin of the world (V. 29) And he bare record, ſaying, I ſaw the Spirit deſcending from heaven like a dove, & it abode upon him. And I knew him not; But he that ſent me to baptize with water, the ſame ſaid unto me, Upon whom thou ſhalt ſee the Spirit deſcending & remaining on him, the ſame is he which baptizeth with the holy Ghoſt. And I ſaw, & bare record, that this is the Son of God (V. 32, 33, 34)

Under these circumstances, that the Baptist was to prepare the way for Christ, & to bear witneſs to his perſon, we have a right to expect his testimony to be clear & particular. Let us then attend to the evidence he has given, & ſee whether it be not as exact as it poſsibly could have been.

By the declaration of John, that he knew not Jeſus, having never before ſeen his perſon, all ſuſpicion of colluſion, or acting by a preconcerted agreement between them is obviated. And that the Baptist deſerves credit in this declaration, is put out of doubt by the different parts of the country in which they had grown up; Jeſus with his parents at Nazareth, John in the deſert country beyond Jordan, or at least near that river on the hither ſide of it. They had, therefore the whole breadth of the land of Israel between them; & from the circumstances of their families, & their retired manner of living, it does not ſeem probable they could make long journeys from home.

There can but one ſcruple ariſe concerning the declaration of John, that he knew not Jeſus. How came he to heſitate about baptizing Jeſus when he offered himſelf? & to tell him, *I have need to be baptized of thee*? unleſs he knew him to be the Christ. But this may be fairly, & to a reaſonable man, ſatisfactorily accounted for, without ſuppoſing the Baptiſt to have had any previous knowledge of the perſon of Jeſus.

The baptiſm of John was the baptiſm of repentance; And we find that a confeſſion of ſins was demanded of thoſe who came to his baptiſm, as a proof of their repentance; For it is written, *Then went out to him Jeruſalem & all Judea* — *& were baptized of him in Jordan*, *confeſſing their ſins* (Matt. iii. 5, 6) The bleſſed Jeſus could neither confeſs nor repent, for He knew no ſin. When, therefore, ſo extraordinary a perſon offered himſelf to the Baptiſt, it would naturally raiſe ſuſpicions in him that He must be Meſsiah to whom he was to bear teſtimony. This impreſsion, together with the conſciouſneſs that he himſelf was a ſinner before God, will fully account for his ſaying, I have need to be baptized of Thee, & am unworthy to adminiſter baptiſm to thee. The reply of Jeſus, that he requeſted baptiſm not becauſe he was a ſinner & needed repentance, but becauſe the baptiſm of John was the ordinance of God, & that it became them both to fulfil all righteouſneſs, by doing every thing which God commanded, not only ſatisfied the ſcruple of the holy Baptiſt, but ought to convince us, that the circumſtances relating to the baptiſm of Jeſus may have all happened without the ſuppoſition that the Baptiſt had any previous knowlege of the perſon of Jeſus.

In the remote reſidence from each other, in which these holy perſons lived, till the time of their public ministry began, we ſee an instance of the care of divine providence to prevent all probability & appearance of previous agreement between them; that the testimony of John might be perfectly free from all exceptions.

Having obviated all ſuſpicions of colluſion on his part, the Baptiſt proceeds to declare the ground on which his testimony ſtood. He who ſent him to baptize with water had given him a ſign, by which he was to know him who was to baptize with the Holy Ghoſt — *the Lamb of God who taketh away the ſin of the world* — namely, the viſible deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt, not in a tranſient but permanent manner — falling & remaining on him. This event John declares he did ſee fulfilled on Jeſus, as he retired from the waters of baptiſm — The heavens were opened the Holy Ghost like a dove deſcended & remained on him, & a voice from heaven proclaimed, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed* (Matt. III. 17) This John ſaw & heard. And having ſeen & heard, he heſitated not to declare Jeſus to be the *Lamb of God who taketh away the ſin of the world*. Nor to give his teſtimony, & bare record that this ſame Jeſus *is the Son of God*.

It is our duty to conſider this teſtimony of the holy Baptiſt, & duly to weigh its force. The importance of the ſubject demands this of us. His teſtimony comes to us under the ſanction of divine authority. It appears to be full to the point, & free from all appearance of deceit. And it directly proves to us, that the *human*

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& divine nature were united in Jesus, making one Christ. For Jeſus was the Lamb of God which taketh away the ſin of the world. This Jeſus died, by making his life an offering for us, & dying on the croſs for our redemption; which he could not have done had he not been man. And this ſame Jesus he declares to be the Son of God, & therefore, of the ſame nature & eſsence with God.

Theſe are the proper ſubjects for our contemplation through the ſeaſon of the Epiphany: And to the devout conſideration of them the Church calls us by the Goſpels appointed for the Sundays after that Feſtival. The deſign of the Church is to fix thoſe two important articles of our religion deep in our hearts; that ſeeing

ing the proceſs of divine love & wisdom for our redemption, we might be led to the proper ſentiments & expreſsions of gratitude to our heavenly Father, for ſo astonishing an instance of his goodneſs, & to ſuch faith & trust in the Redeemer as his exalted nature & tranſcendent merit require. He is that very perſon who *was in the beginning with God*, who *made all things that were made*, who *hath life in himself*, & is, therefore, able to give life to us. From this ſtate of eminency above all creatures, he, of his love to us, condeſcended to depart, & to put off its glories, that he might take our nature upon him, & become *the Lamb of God which taketh away the ſin of the world*, by being *made a ſin-offering for us*, that we might be *made the righteous* *ouſneſs of God in him*, & obtain *the gift of God; eternal life*. We have therefore every inducement to believe in him, & rely upon ~~him & to rely upon~~ his power & merit for our ſalvation. We have also every reaſon to ſubmit ourſelves to his will, & do the things wch he commands. Tho' he knew no ſin he ſubmitted to the baptiſm of repentance becauſe it was the will of God, & to teach us the neceſsity of repentance & obedience towards God. To repentance also he called all men with his own heavenly voice of grace & love, as the neceſsary qualification for entering into his Chch *Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*. God give us all this grace; that repenting truly of all ſin, & ſerving him faithfully in his Chch we may obtain his promiſe of everlasting life thro' Jesus Christ. Amen.

Part II. or, Matt. III. 15. *Suffer it to be ſo now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteouſneſs*

Having conſidered the teſtimony of the holy Baptiſt concerning our Saviour Jesus Christ, I beg leave at this time to call your attention to the reaſon which Christ gave why the Baptiſt ſhould adminiſter the baptiſm of repentance to him, tho' he knew no ſin & conſequently needed no repentance. *Suffer it to be ſo now; for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteouſneſs* (Matt. III. 15)

From this reply of Christ we are taught that it is our duty to conform ourſelves to the will of God in all things, & to obey all his commands, whether they be of a poſitive or moral nature. For if this was neceſsary for Christ, most certainly it is for us. Obedience to God is our righteouſneſs. The word has reference to ſome law, & means doing *right* according to that law — He who obeys the law, with regard to that law is *righteous*; He who desobeys it is *guilty*. The meaning, therefore, of the expression *fulfilling all righteousneſs*, as it relates to God is obedience to all the commandments of God. This is the duty of every one: And as Christ came to fulfil all the law as well as the prophets; & also, by his most holy life, to ſet us a perfect example of obedience to the commands of God, he ſubmitted to the baptism of John, tho', as it was the baptism of repentance, it did not personally concern him, who, as he had no ſin, not only needed no repentance, but was incapable of it. For the baptism of John being fm. heaven (Matt. XXI.25) whoever refused to ſubmit to it, refused to ſubmit to the will of God in that instance, & could not be ſaid to *fulfil all righteouſneſs*.

I know ſome Divines have made a great difference between diſobeying moral & poſitive precepts; making the former of very great, the latter of little conſequence. But let us make what difference between them we please, diſobedience to a poſsitive precept is diſobedience to God, & a denial of his authority, at least, a refusal to ſubmit to it in that instance, & therefore is a ſin of immorality. For morality conſiſting in obedience to thoſe moral obligations or precepts which arise from reaſon, & the relation we ſtand in to one another, & to Alm. God, the refusal to ſubmit to the will of our creator is as great immorality as a man can commit. //

// By poſsitive precepts are meant thoſe which, as far as we can ſee, arise not from reaſon or nature, but depend ſolely on the appointment of God. Such were circumciſion, & ſacrifices, & the paſsover under the old law; And ſuch are the ſacraments & confirmation in the Christian Church. Now all the laws of God, poſsitive & moral, ſtand on the authority of God; & the authority of God is equally oppoſed, whether we ſhew our oppoſition by tranſgreſsing a poſsitive or moral command.

The Positive commands of God.

// Men are apt to think that the poſsitive commands of God are merely arbitrary, & have nothing to ſupport them but the ſovereign ~~command~~ will of God; but that moral commands, having reaſon & propriety in them, are more ſacred, & their tranſgreſsion attended with greater guilt, than the tranſgreſsion of poſsitive precepts can be. Under this impreſsion, we ſee many people who would ſhudder at the thoughts of living in any groſs immorality, yet

neg

paſs their lives in quiet & content, without paying regard to the poſitive inſtitutions of God in his Church.

To ſuppoſe that God commands any thing from mere *will*, without regard to reaſon & propriety, is to think more diſreſpectfully of him, than any decent person will be ready to own. The highest reaſon directs all he does, because reaſon in him must be absolutely perfect; & being under the direction of goodneſs which is infinite, is a certain aſsurance to us, that the poſitive inſtitutions of religion are as much founded in reaſon & propriety as any moral duties can be; & are as conducive to our advantage, though we may not be able to diſcern it.

That obedience to poſitive precepts ſhews greater ſubmiſsion to God, than obedience to moral commands can do, is certain. The reaſon & propriety of moral commands must strike every conſiderate person; & obedience is probably oftner paid to them, because they appear reaſonable to us, than because the authority of God has enjoined them. By this means the principle of obedience is divided — part of it ariſes from the opinion we have of the reaſonableneſs of the command, & the authority of God only comes in as a ſecondary motive. People who value themſelves on their morality, & neglect religion, generally act on this ground. They do what they think is right, becauſe they ſee it is reaſonable they should do ſo — it procures them a character for honesty & integrity — it promotes the peace & good order of ſociety — but God is not in their thoughts, nor does his authority ever come into their minds. This is virtue, & as I have no wish to leſsen its influence, I will not dispute its right to that appellation. But however virtuous it may be, it is not obedience to God. It regards not his authority as moral governor of the world, but ariſes merely from what is apprehended to be reaſonable in itſelf.

With poſitive precepts the case is ~~[illegible]~~ different. We see but in part the reaſon & propriety of them, & must trust to the divine wisdom & goodneſs, that they are right in themselves, & proper for us. Here the motive to obedience can ariſe from nothing but the authority of God, & from a disposition to do as he directs. We believe he hath commanded them for our benefit, & we comply with them in humble confidence that, as he knows what is right & best for us, he will accept our obedience, bleſs us in the use of them, & make them effectual to the ends for which his wisdom & goodneſs appointed them.

(It may help us to form a right judg-
on Atk. 22
ment

ment on this point to recollect, that the test of obedience which God appointed for Adam was not a moral, but a poſitive command. Adam could not ſee the reaſon of the prohibition, because he did not know what was meant by *dying*. Unhappily he had not that confidence in God wch relies ſolely on his goodneſs & truth. Want of faith, & of that principle of obedience which diſpoſes the heart to fulfil all righteousneſs by doing every thing wch God commands, was Adams fault, & led him to ruin.

Abraham acted on different grounds. God had ſaid to him, *Walk before me & be thou perfect* (Gen. XVII. 1) This cannot be ſuppoſed to relate to moral commands. The character of Abraham must convince us that he was exactly careful to fulfil every precept of virtue as far as human infirmity would permit. The meaning, therefore, of the direction he received was, that he ſhould obey, with an honeſt & upright heart, all the poſitive Commands which God ſhould give him. Under this diſpoſition of abſolute obedience, he heſitated not to leave his country when God commanded, & to become a ſojourner in a ſtrange land. He refused not the rite of circumciſion, nor to offer his beloved ſon Iſaac, the heir of the promiſes of God, upon the altar, when God required him to do ſo. All theſe were poſitive precepts, & had no natural reaſon, as far as Abraham could ſee, to ſupport them, except the ſingle one, that it was reaſonable that he ſhould obey God in all things. And through his obedience to theſe poſitive precepts it was, that his faith was accounted to him for righteouſneſs, obtained the honourable appellation of the friend of God, & was diſtinguiſhed as the ſpiritual father of all thoſe who ſhould, after his example, believe in God, to the end of the world.)

It is far from my deſign to depreciate moral duties, or to ſet obedience to poſitive precepts above them. Whenever they come in competition with each other, the poſitive muſt give way to the moral precept. This point our Saviour decided in he ſet works of mercy above the poſitive inſtitution of ſacrifice, quoting the prophet Hoſea to the Jews who condemned his diſciples for relieving their hunger by plucking the ears of corn on the ſabbath day, *I will have mercy & not ſacrifice*, that is, rather than ſacrifice (Hoſ. VI. 6. Matt. XII. 7)

But as theſe duties can but ſeldom interfere; & as the higheſt proof of our obedience to God muſt ariſe from the regard we pay to his poſsitive inſtitutions, let me recommend to the ~~your~~ imitation of the ~~rea~~ the example of the holy Jeſus who, ~~hath ſet you; & aſsure yourſelves you will not err while you follow it.~~ That he might fulfil all righteouſneſs, ~~he~~ ſubmitted to the will of God in the baptiſm of John, though he neither needed, nor could exerciſe that repentance which Johns baptiſm required. Go then & do as he did — with honest and upright hearts, ſteadily endeavour to fulfil all righteouſneſs, by obeying all the commandments of God — truſting in his wiſdom & goodneſs that there is the higheſt reaſon & propriety in them all, though your ſhort & obſcure ſight may not fully perceive them!))

I pray God to give all of you this diſpoſition of ready obedience to his holy will, & grant that I may ſee the happy fruits of it in your punctual & devout attendance upon the eucharistic ſacrifice which he hath ordained in his Church, the commemoration of the ſufferings & death of the Redeemer Jesus Christ. If there be a divine command for the obſervance of this inſtitution, it is our duty to obey it in the beſt manner we are able, becauſe it is our duty to obey God in all things. Remember, therefore, that as it became Christ to fulfil all righteouſneſs, & in doing ſo he hath ſet you an example that ye might follow his ſteps, it is your duty to comform yourſelves to it with a ready will. So ſhall ye be his children indeed — the partakers of his grace & heirs of his promiſes. God grant this to us all, for his ſake who died for our ſins, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

N L – 7 ☉ after △ 1801

The Centurion of Capernaum.

John IV. 48.

Except ye see signs & wonders, ye will not believe.

It is remarked that during his ministry on earth, the holy Jesus "went about doing good", healing all manner of diseases among the people, & publishing the glad tidings of salvation to all who would hear them. Returning from one of these benevolent excursions thro' the country, to Cana of Galilee, where he had formerly manifested his divine power by turning water into wine; a certain nobleman, (βασιλικος) a courtier, a great man in the court of Herod Antipas, at that time tetrarch, or governor of Galilee under the Romans, came to him from Capernaum, & entreated him to go home with him

& heal his son who was at the point of death.

Instead of returning a direct answer to his request, Jesus endeavoured to excite in him that faith in his divine power & goodneſs, which appear to be neceſsary in order to receive any benefit, especially any spiritual benefit from him. "Except", said he, "ye see signs & wonders, ye will not believe". — As much as to say — The goodneſs & excellency of the doctrin I preach, the joyful tidings I declare to the world, — the good news of Gods salvation to the poor, health to the broken-hearted, deliverance to the captives, sight to the blind, liberty to the oppreſsed, the acceptable year of the Lord, have no effect upon you men of eminency & station in life. — Signs & wondrous works, something to charm the mind & fill the imagination with wonder, is what you principally delight in. The glory & interests of the world have engroſsed your hearts, & wedded them to it. No room is left for faith in me to enter, which alone can be your salvation from the evils of this world, or from the miseries of eternity.

The reply of the nobleman shews him to have been most anxiously solicitous for his sons life — Sir, come down "ere my only child die". — I beseech you wast not the time in any remarks: my childs life is nearly at an end, & will be lost by any delay. Thy power, I trust, can relieve him. Come therefore with me, that we may get to him before he die.

"Go thy way", replied Jesus; there is no need of my going with thee; "Thy son liveth" — thy son is recovered of his disease.

Nothing appears in the behaviour of this nobleman to induce us to believe he had any notion or expectation that Christ could cure his son at a distance, & restore him to health without personally attending on him, or directing some means for his recovery. Yet when he heard him declare in poſsitive terms, that his son was recovered of his disease, ~~but~~ he gave full credit to what he said — "He believed "the word that Jesus had spoken unto him"; & in perfect confidence of its truth, "went his way" on his return home.

It is obvious to remark concerning the miracles of Jesus, that he frequently demanded of those who in their distreſs applied to him for relief, Whether they had such faith in his power as to believe he could do that for them which they requested? Sometimes he spoke highly in commendation of their faith, saying, their "faith "had saved them; their faith had made them whole". At other times he said, "According to your faith be it unto you".

This hath led many pious Christians to suppose that the faith of the party was necessary to the success of the miracle. Useful it may have been, as it manifested a disposition to receive benefit from the miracle, even health to the soul as well as to the body: As it shewed also a persuasion that he who could heal the body of diseases, could in like manner heal the soul of the diseases of sin, if, with penitence & faith, they looked to him for so inestimable a blessing.

But the faith of the person could not be necessary to give efficacy to the power of Jesus on the diseases of the body. His power was almighty & needed nothing to give efficacy to it; much less could it receive efficacy from the faith of weak & sinful men. When he raised the dead to life again — When, for instance, he called Lazarus from the grave of corruption, whose

faith

of faith assisted the power of his command, "Lazarus "come forth".

That the nobleman to whom the text relates had faith in Jesus, in this sense, that he believed Jesus could relieve his son even at the point of death appears from his applying to him for that purpose. But Jesus saw best to conduct the miracle in such a was as to convince him — & ought to convince us all — that his faith contributed nothing to his sons recovery. His son was sick at Capernaum, a good distance from Cana. Instead of going thither with him as the nobleman expected, Jesus directed him to return home, assuring him his son was recovered.

What effect now could this mans faith have had on the disease of his son? He indeed believed the word of Jesus, & did as Jesus bade him; but his son was healed before he did either.

As he returned home, full of anxious hope & fear, probably mixed with some doubt, his servants met him with the joyful news of his sons recovery. On inquiry he found that the fever had left his son precisely at the time when Jesus said to him, "Thy soon liveth". Convinced that his son was recovered by the power of Jesus, he & his whole household believed in him.

I have two or three remarks to make on this history, to which I beg your candid attention. The first is,

1. The decided proof which this miracle gives us of the divinity of Jesus. It is an established maxim, & takes place through all nature, that nothing can act where it is not. Jesus was at this time at Cana of Galilee, near the coast of the Mediterranean sea: The sick lad was at Capernaum, acroſs the country, on the sea of Galilee, or lake of Tiberias. Nothing then but the divinity of Jesus, which is every where present, filling all places, could act at Capernaum while his bodily presence was at Cana. Jesus, therefore, is God, & has the fulneſs of the Godhead residing in him. Of this his omnipresence; that is, of his being always present in all places he gave us sufficient intimation when he said, "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that "came down from heaven, even the son of man who is in "heaven" — on earth while he is in heaven — at Caper-

naum while he was at Cana — That power which thus operates every where, must be every where, & must belong to the divinity, for nothing else is every where. *Jesus*, therefore, *is God*.

Another circumstance in this miracle which proves the divinity of Jesus is, that it was effected merely by his *will*; not only without the use of any means, but even without the speaking a word. But that will which can accomplish its purpose by its own intrinsic energy, without any external exertion, without any dependence on other causes, must be divine will. *Jesus*, therefore, *is God*.

Another thing which in this miracle, in common with the other miracles of Jesus, proves his divinity, is, that they shew all the diseases of the human body, as well as all the powers of nature, to be subject to him: for they retired & ceased, & suspended their operations, not only at his command, but at his will. Now he who commands the iſsues of life & death, of sickneſs & health, must be God. He only who gave life can continue it, or take it away. Fevers, palsies, leprosies, dropsies, all diseases incurable by medical art, & death itself were subject to the command of Jesus. When he spake they retired obedient to his word. When he willed they ceased & existed no longer. None but the author of life can continue it to the dying, or renew it in the dead where it hath ceased. Jesus, therefore, to whom all diseases, & even death itself were subject, must be God.

2. This miracle, & particularly the text taken from its history, give us reason to remark the strange perversity in the disposition of men,— they overlook the excellency, & goodness, & truth of Christs religion; they neglect its efficacy to procure remission of sins, holiness of heart & life, & eternal salvation for them, & seek for signs & wonders, for new & strange things, for new doctrines & strange stories, for new ways & strange means of salvation — for any thing that can but amuse the imagination & beguile the time.

"Except", said Jesus to the nobleman, "ye see signs "& wonders, ye will not believe". Was this nobleman the only person in fault? Have not others followed his example? The remark of our Saviour is, no doubt too general to be confined to a single person. Its ministers & all pious Christians must be sensible that it may be extended to the present times, with the same propriety it was then made.

If people do not now look for signs & wonders, as those words denote miracles, they too often look for some bodily gratification in their religion. Some look for smooth words & fine turned periods, by which their ears & fancy may be amused & delighted. Others prefer violent gestures, a loud voice, & harsh expressions of terror, by which the weak are frighted, & the unguarded confounded. But true religion, which consists neither in fright nor amazement, nor in the amusement of the fancy is little advanced by either of these methods. This unhappiness will attend people who place their religion too much in hearing sermons, & too little in doing the will of God. They might just as well place it in seeing signs & wonders.

Nothing in religion can do you any good but as it is the will of God. What God hath commanded, what he hath forbidden, you are to do or forbear, because it is his will. Where the mode is specified, you are to follow & obey it. Where the mode is left to human prudence, the direction of Gods Church will be your best & safest guide. Where that also is wanting, your own reason, the spirit of your religion, & your disposition to do every thing to the glory of God, will be sufficient directories to you.

The way that leadeth unto life will ever be plainly marked out to you by one or other of these. If you desire more; if you wish for signs & wonders, for something new & strange in religion, it can not be for a good purpose. You may adopt expedients that may please you; but they will fail you, & the time will come when you will find the declaration of Isaiah verified in yourselves. "As when a hungry man dreameth, "& behold he eateth; but he awaketh, & his soul is empty. "or as when a thirsty man dreameth, & behold he drinketh; but he awaketh, & behold he is faint; & his soul "hath appetite" — he is not satisfied nor refreshed with his dream of eating & drinking: So will it be with every ry one who, instead of attending, in matters of religion, to the will of God, follow their own inventions, & strive to please their humour & fancy, more than to please him.

3. The history of this miracle wrought on the noblemans son, presents us with a fair opportunity of considering the influence which the miracles of Jesus ought to have on us who profess to be his disciples.

You have heard that the miracles of Jesus, especially his raising the dead to life, & curing the most obstinate deseases of the human body with his word, or only by willing their life or recovery, even when they were at a distance, incontestably prove his divine power & Godhead. We ought, therefore, ever to pay him that duty, honor, & worship which are due to his divine nature. He is our Creator & Redeemer. We profess to believe in him under those characters. What he did & suffered in our nature when he took it on him to redeem it from sin & death, established his right & title to them. On the authority of holy scripture, the Church hath addressed our prayers & praises to the Almighty Father through his merits, & in his name. Prayer is ever made unto him, & daily is he praised in the assemblies of his Saints, & by all particular Christians. When we are admitted members of his Church, we are baptised in his name, together with the name of the Father, & of the Holy Ghost.

In these prayers & praises it is our duty to join fervently & sincerely, with heart & with voice, & with humble adoration of body; that our faith in him may be quickened, strengthened, perfected; our hope enlivened, confirmed, & made sure & certain, & our dependence on, & obedience to the Almighty Father rendered absolute, thro' his merit & intercession. For all these purposes, duty requires our constant & punctual attendance at Church on every opportunity which Gods providence shall present to us.

This duty becomes the more necessary on two account (1) Because at Church we have the principles of moral virtue & of our holy religion explained to us, & the pra tice of them enforced on us, not only in the sermon, but in the lessons, epistles, Gospels, & prayers. (2) We live in an age when every thing that relates to religion — all its doctrines & principles ~~of religion~~ are critically examined, not only by the principles of reason, of which no reasonable man will complain, but by the principles of modern philosophy, of scepticism, of infidelity; & whatever will not bear the test of a mans own opinion is immediately rejected as being of no authority or importance. Under the notion of liberty, men are become so impatient of restraint, that not only the authority of civil government, but of God himself is in danger of being thrust out of the world, as far as the efforts of pragmatical & licentious men can effect it.

Religion among those who profess any, is generally made to be just what a man pleases. The authority of God declared in holy scripture hath become of but little importance. Every one taking the liberty to put his own construction on it so as to make it comport with his own preconceived opinion.

our religion, the divinity of Jesus the Saviour hath been discarded by ſupercilious & proud men; who affecting to owe nothing to God, but every thing to themſelves, have with the divinity, disowned also the atonement, & ſatiſfaction, & interceſsion ~~of~~ & merits of Xt, for the ſin of the world; & have left us nothing of our Saviour, but his testimony to the truth of God, & the example of his holy life.

In this ſtate of the world, b. B. it becomes our duty to hold fast, not only the profeſsion, but the principles of our religion, to believe fully, & aſsert openly that faith which was formerly delivered to the Saints – to Xns – by Xt & his aps: aſsuring ourſelves that every thing that was true in religion then, is true now; conſequently whatever is new in religion is false.

Particularly, as our hope is built on J. Xt. the Saviour — as we look for acceptance with God, not for our own faith or works, but for his merit; for remiſsion of ſins, thro' his atonement; ~~[illegible]~~ for the acceptance of our prayers & perſons, thro' his interceſsion; for the reſurrection of our bodies, thro' his reſurrection; for eternal life with God, thro' his mediation — And as the efficacy of all these depends on his divinity, which, during his ministry, he declared by his words, & proved by his works; which also was preached by his Aps, & confirmed by the ſigns

& mighty works, which they wrought in his name — let us ever hold fast this profession — faith in the divinity of Jesus, that he was indeed the Son of God — the word of God united to human nature, making one Christ.

In this faith let us live; In this faith worship the Father Almighty, & the Son J. Xt. in unity with the H. Gt. In this triune God put our faith, & hope, & trust — worshipping, & praising, & giving glory, as it was in the beginning is now, & shall be world without end Amen.

Mr Charl

N-L- Septuagesima ⊙ '99-

Whitsunday ——— 1805

'07

Septu.a ——— 1813

John IX:4.

I must work the works &c:

Preached at drowned meadow May 1816

John IX. 4.

I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day; the night cometh when no man can work.

These are the words of the holy Jesus, the Redeemer & Saviour of men; & ought, on his authority, to make the deepest impression on us. He spake nothing at random; nothing without the deepest & most interesting sense; nothing without a view to instruct & benefit mankind. For their benefit he descended from heaven & clothed himself with mortal flesh. His business was to instruct & redeem mankind, that he might fit them for, & bring them to everlasting life.

To accomplish this work he was invested with the offices of the prophet & priest of God. The duty of a prophet is to instruct men in the will of God, & bring them to that penitence, faith, & amendment of life which God requires. The duty of a priest is to make atonement for the sin of the people & reconcile them to God, that he may have mercy on them.

Not only in the text, but in other places of the scripture Christ declares his earnest desire to accomplish the work of him that sent him — "My "meat", said he, "is to do the will of him that sent "me, & to finish his work" (Joh. IV. 34)

(All expressions of this kind relating to Christ, are to be understood with respect to his prophetic character. They regard him not as being the eternal Son of God, but as being the prophet of God to the world. They are therefore no arguments against his divine nature, tho' by ignorant or prejudiced men, they have been sometimes alledged with that view.

The business of Christ as the prophet of God to the world, was to instruct & reform it. How anxious he was to accomplish this business, the text informs us. "I must work the works of him that sent me"— That is my duty as his prophet from whom I came forth. I am therefore anxiously solicitous that this work should be fulfilled without delay; even now "while it is day".

The day is known to be the proper time in which to perform any business. And it is a known maxim with industrious people, not to put that off till tomorrow which can be done to day. Tomorrow is a time of uncertainty — to us it may never come. To day, the present time is all the time that we can command; & it

had

best be well employed; for God only knows whether any is to succeed it.

The manner in which Christ speaks of this day is worthy of our particular attention. The whole period of human life, which is made up of days succeeding days, is the season ~~of doing~~ of doing the will of God in this world — the time of working "the works of him that sent "us" into it. And yet Christ hath summed up the whole continuance of it as one day. How insignificant does the whole period of human life appear, which is but as the continuance of ~~one~~ a single day.

The shortness of human life, & the uncertainty of it continuance from day to day, is a full justification of considering it in this manner. And yet, how very differently do we estimate make it? Ask the man of thirty, — probably the shortness of human life has never entered his head. He hopes to live till seventy, & plans his business accordingly. — His worldly business I mean; for probably the works of him who sent him into the world, have never yet employed his attention. Ask then the man of seventy years — He does not possibly find himself as he did at thirty; but he is well, & by all calculation has a chance of living ten years longer; & has laid out full employment for an active man for the whole of that period. What becomes of the interests of eternity — the proper business of human life, it may not be hard to conjecture.

The reason assigned by Christ, why he must "work the works of him that sent him, while it "was day," is that "the night cometh when no man "can work."

That the night is an unfit time to accomplish any business which requires exactness & activity is well known to every one. Such business must be performed in the day, while we have the light of the sun, & while the body is unfatigued with labour. When the day is past the time of business is over, & the season of rest is come. Whatever is then done will be done imperfectly thro' want of light & of necessary strength.

The reason then assigned by Christ, why he must work the works of him that sent him, while it is day, viz: because the night cometh when no man can work, is a good one, & comes to this conclusion — I must do the work which he who sent me into the world assigned me to do, while the season of accomplishing it continues; for that season will soon be over. [Old age, sickness, death will come, & will shortly deprive me of all opportunity of doing it.]

Now tho' what Christ here said, he said of himself, & of that work which he came into the world to accomplish, viz: to instruct, reform, & redeem the world; yet, in a proper & true sense, it may be said of every person who comes into the world.

As Christ, the prophet & priest of God, had a proper business assigned him by him who sent him into the world under those characters, which business or work he must necessarily do while the season of working continued, or go out of the world & leave it undone; So we have every one of us a work assigned us to do by him who sent us into the world, which work we must do while the season or opportunity of working continues; or we must go out of the world & leave the work undone: For sickness, old age, death will shortly come upon us, & deprive us of all opportunity of prosecuting it — "The night cometh when "no man can work".

(The work which Christ had to do in this world was, as the prophet of God, to instruct men in the knowledge of his will, to call them to repentance, to reform their evil lives, & set them a perfect example of that holy obedient life which God requires: As the priest of God, to make atonement for their sins, & deliver them from the wrath of God which on account of their sins, lay upon them; to procure for them the gracious presence of the Holy Spirit, the blessed privilege of a joyful resurrection from death, & to open to them the kingdom of immortality in heaven.)

The work that we have to do, is, as the people of God, his children by adoption, & the regeneration of holy baptism, to receive the instructions which Christ, as the prophet of God, gave us in the knowledge of the divine will; to repent of our sins, & reform our evil lives, as he taught us to do; to follow carefully that example of holy obedience to the will of God which he set us; As the redeemed people of God, to trust to that atonement for sin which he made; to look to him for deliverance from the power, guilt, & punishment of sin upon our repentance, & for the energy — the holy power of the Spirit of God, to enable us to repent & live in holiness of life; for a happy resurrection of the body at the last day, & for a triumphant entry with him into the kingdom of immortality in heaven.

His work Christ was to do while it was day — while the season of working lasted. And how anxious he was to accomplish & finish his work in its proper season; before the night came in which no man could work, appears from his manner of speaking in the text, "I must work the works of "him that sent me, while it is day" — It is my duty — necessity lies on me — I must be diligent — I have no time to loose — The night cometh in which no "man can work."

It has been noted that other places of Scripture describe the eagerness & intense application with which he set himself to do, & finish this work. The natural craving of hunger for food, was but a faint shadow of that earnest desire which Christ had to do the work of God. Therefore said he, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, "& to finish his work".

The history of his life by the holy Evangelists, gives us one continued account of his unwearied application to this heavenly buſineſs. That he might attend to it, & to it only, he poſseſsed ~~nothing~~ nothing in this world — neither house, nor lands, nor even a home of his own; but traveled the country on foot from place to place, & subsisting on the pious bounty of good people. Strictly true therefore is what St. Peter says of him, & may serve to sum up the whole proof of his earnest desire to do the will of God — He "went about doing good" — instructing the people in the will of God, relieving their distreſses by the most benevolent miracles, & particularly by "healing all those who were oppreſsed of the devil" (Acts. X. 38)

I am far from thinking it the duty of Christians to endeavour to imitate the example of the holy Jesus in the particular actions of his life; [~~nor did I mention the above circumstances with that view to excite them to do so. Some enthusiasts are said to have endeavoured to fast forty days as Christ did; to work miracles in imitation of him; & particularly to raise the dead again to life. There is no need of saying any thing to expose the extravagancy & folly of such an attempt. Nor let us ridicule the unhappy persons who have endeavoured to do so. They are more entitled to our pity as madmen, than to our contempt as visionary enthusiasts.~~]

But however the particular actions of Christs life, especially those which proceeded from the prophetic & priestly offices which he held, ~~is~~ are too high for our imitation, & therefore are unfit for it, the general principles on which he acted are more accomodated to our circumstances, & to all conditions of human life, & are, therefore, the proper subjects of our imitation. Let me mention two or three of them.

He went about doing good. Benevolence, therefore, was the principle on which he acted. In this principle we can imitate him. And tho' the instances of our imitation must fall far short of that perfection which he exhibited, yet they may proceed from the same root, the love of God & man — an earnest desire of Gods glory & of mans felicity.

If it be not our duty to travel about to look for objects of benevolence — And this can be the duty possibly of no one, certainly of but few; because the wants of their own families & connections will generally require their attention at home, that *they* may not become objects of benevolence themselves, & prove burdensome to others; yet the objects of this duty which are in their own neighbourhood, & which daily present themselves to their observation, will give full exercise to a very high degree of christian benevolence, & will frequently call it into action, if there be but a disposition of heart to follow its heavenly dictates.

In particular, Christ, as the prophet of God, instructed men in the will of God, & healed those who were oppressed of the devil. This act of benevolence is in some good degree in every Christians power; & I would to God every Christian did perform only a reasonable part of his duty in this respect. Every Christian can, on particular occasions, instruct & inform the ignorant in their duty, explain the principles of

Christ's religion, & the obligations of holiness, & urge men to the practice of them. Every Christian can call & exhort offenders to repentance & amendment of life, to faith in God, & submission to his will. And let him remember that every sinner is a captive of satan, & that his only deliverance must be thro' faith & obedience to God. Every effort to bring him to repentance, is an effort to heal him who is oppressed of satan, whether it be done by a minister or by a private Christian, by exhortation & preaching, or the silent example of a holy life.

(The voluntary poverty in which our Saviour lived, if it call not us to the renunciation of the world in the same manner & degree, calls us to the renouncing of it from the same principle — the detestation of covetousness & the love of the world; the abhorrence of that pride, & trust in its riches, I delight in its pleasures, which forever spring from a worldly Spirit. It therefore becomes our duty to renounce this spirit of the world, the spirit of covetousness, because the "friendship "of the world is enmity against God"; And "whoso-"ever will be a friend of the world, is the enemy "of God" (Ja. IV. 4) Therefore said another Apostle, "Love not the world, neither the things that are "in the world. If any man love the world, the "love of the Father is not in him. For all that is "in the world, the lust of the flesh, & the lust of the "eyes, & the pride of life, is not of the Father, but "is of the world. And the world passeth away, "& the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will "of God abideth forever (1 Jo. II. 15-17) Use there-fore this world according to the necessities of your nature & the principles of your religion; but abuse it not to the purposes of lust & sensuality: In imitation of your Redeemer be ever ready to do good; & shew the power of the Spirit of God in you, by cheerfully & liberally relieving the distreſses of others, as God shall give you ability & opportunity.

Lastly

(The great work which every one hath to do in this world, is to live according to the will of God who sent him into it; & sent him that he might have an opportunity of working out his salvation by the power of Gods grace & holy Spirit, & of becoming fit to inherit his kingdom. This is the true Christian life. Of this life Christ set us the example

His busineſs was to instruct, reform, & save those who should come to God by him. This busineſs he faithfully & diligently pursued. Our busineſs is to be instructed, reformed, & saved by him. We must, therefore, receive & follow his instructions, repent of & forsake our sins, & humbly apply ourselves

selves to obey God in all things; trusting in his goodness, & grace, & Holy Spirit, that he will not leave us, nor take his Holy Spirit from us; but conduct us, thro' faith & holiness to his heavenly kingdom. After the example of Christ, our duty is to be diligent & faithful in doing the will of God in all things — now "while it is "day", because the "night cometh when no man "can work".

God dispose us so to do, & enable us to carry that good disposition to full effect — That obeying him in every thing, & abounding in all good works, we may attain his promises, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

Part the second.

It was observed in the former part of this discourse, that by the word day in the text is meant the whole period of our being in this world. "I must work the works of him that sent "me while it is day", therefore is, I must do the works of God, & fulfill his will during the whole period of my life. The reason assigned is, because the night cometh when no man can work; that is, death will come & put an end to my life in this world, & to all the concerns of it; & among the rest, to the concerns of religion, the most important of them all.

Tho' the text was spoken by Christ particularly of himself, & of the work he had to do in the world, as the prophet & priest of God for the redemption & salvation of it; yet it is true of of every man born into the world. They all come into it by the good providence of God, & may be properly said to be sent into it by him. They all have a work to do in it, viz: to work out their own salvation, by living in obedience to God, under the conduct & guidance of his Spirit — that is, by doing the works of God — those works which he wills & commands.

It remains then, that they be diligently & faithfully employed in this busineſs. For it is certainly right & proper in itself, & must be eſsential to the happineſs of all reasonable creatures, that they live agreeably to the will of their Creator, & govern themſelves by it in all things. He knows their nature, & what will make it happy or miserable. He is good; of his goodneſs he brought them into being that he might bleſs them, & make them happy in their existence.

He will therefore require nothing but what their happiness requires — command them nothing that can hurt them, forbid them nothing that can do them good.

It is therefore reasonable & right that we should worship & adore our Creator, resign ourselves to his will, & obey his commands; that is work the works of him that sent us into the world faithfully & diligently all the days of our lives; that we be not surprized by "the night", the death of the body, before our work be done.

There are several considerations, which, if we will attend to them, will shew this to be not only our reasonable duty, but necessary for us.

1. The benefit of such a life will be all our own; no profit can redound to God from it.

That he is infinitely, perfectly happy in himself, both our reason & holy religion teach us. Whatever is infinite & perfect cannot be increased or improved. God therefore can receive no addition to his happiness from any thing we can do. For the same reason he can suffer no diminution from any bad or evil conduct of ours. All the benefit therefore from that holy life which he requires must be ours; & must end in our happiness.

Happiness hath been the pursuit of all men from the beginning of the world. It hath been sought for in all possible ways, & by all possible means, & hath never been found. This circumstance should induce us to turn our attention some other way, to obtain that which our nature so ardently wishes, & endeavour to secure it in another world, since it is not to be had in this. No way is sure of success but that which God hath pointed out — the seeking for immortality in heaven, by doing the will — working

ing the works of him who sent us into the world. That we ought to do this immediately, & with our utmost diligence, will appear from another consideration, viz:

2. That the life we now live is at most but short, at best but uncertain, & frequently ends much before its natural period.

Seventy years, compared with eternity, the proper period of our existance, is as nothing. And yet few people live more than seventy years, & they who do, the remainder of their lives proves but labour & sorrow.

We talk of seventy years as being the duration of human life, & scripture & experience justify that opinion. But neither scripture nor experience justify the opinion that we shall live that full period. The scripture always represents human life as being extremely precarious, & perpetually liable to end, — short lived as grass, as a vapour, a bubble; of as uncertain continuance as smoke, & as soon dissipated & gone.

If we turn to experience it will tell us the same thing. We see that far the greater part of men die before they have seen seventy years. No period of life is exempt from the stroke of death. All who are born hold their life on one & the same precarious tenure. [Before they have seen the light, or breathed the air of this world, many expire in their entrance into it.] Many more in their infancy & childhood; & youth & manhood, the firmest periods of life, have no certain protection against death. Who than can promise himself to live seventy years? And if he could, he must remember that even that period will present him with several arguments why he should be diligent

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& faithful in doing all those things which God requires of him as necessary to eternal felicity in heaven. For,

3. Human life in its best estate is clogged with many difficulties & incumbrances, which will prove to be great impediments, some of them direct bars to that holy & religious life which can, with any propriety, be called doing the will of him that sent us.

I do not here include a wicked, immoral life. That is more than an impediment or bar to doing the will of God. It is a direct contradiction to it, & must come under another consideration.

But there are some circumstances of life, which are good or bad, as we manage them. Nothing sinful in them of themselves, but we may make them so by our imprudent conduct. They will therefore promote a life of holiness, & advance our preparation for eternity, or they will be bars & obstacles in our way, just as we manage them.

The cares of life — I mean not that anxious restless care for the things of the world which distresses the hearts of many people, but that necessary attention to the support of the body, without which even good men would come short of their duty. This attention to the necessities of the body, if it be conducted by the principles of religion, will advance the life of holiness in us. It is so far doing the will of God. He gave us our bodies; & hath put the means of providing for them in our power. Diligence & frugality in the use of those means is part of our duty to him; & a duty which he requires we should steadily & conscientiously pursue; that neither we ourselves, nor any that belong to us, may be burthensome to others: And also, that we may be able to relieve others who are suffering under the distreſses of life.

But it is no mans duty to extend this neceſsary care for the body into a solicitude to amaſs an estate. If he does, his care will be apt to degenerate into covetousneſs & the love of the world; into an unchristian, niggardly disposition which can give nothing to the objects of charity; into a selfish, uncandid, dishoneſt manner of transacting busineſs; or into diſsipation & the vices of sensuality. These are direct bars, fatal obstacles to a life of holineſs — the proper life of a christian — & if persisted in, will put a full end to it. It is not working the works of God; it is serving the lust of the world which paſseth away.

away (1 John II. 17)

[Another impediment which will probably come in our way, & prevent our attending so diligently on doing the will of God as we ought, are the accidents of life. Among these may be reckoned not only those which happen directly to the body, or to our busineſs, but the death, or ill conduct of our children or friends, the failure of those with whom we deal &c: All these, especially when they are great, are apt to distract the mind, & take off its attention from the one thing needful, to remedy or alleviate the present distreſs.

I mean not that they will neceſsarily be productive of evil consequences to a religious life. But, under the infirmities of human nature, there is great danger of their being so. We ought therefore to take great care that they do not warp us from our duty, or slacken our attention to it: And to pray to God that he would support us under them, & enable us to convert them into occasions of increasing our faith, & hope, & trust in him, our dependence on him & submission to his will.

How often have losses in business tempted people to recur to dishonest arts to remedy their misfortunes? How often does the death loss of our friends sink the heart in despondency, & tempt us to repine & murmur at the dispensations of divine providence?

Guard against these consequences; & remember that God is always & infinitely good. When he blesseth us, it is that his goodness may lead us to repentance. When he chastiseth us, it is that his chastisements may correct something amiss in us, or, by exercise, to strengthen our patience, & make our virtuous habits more perfect.]

Another difficulty with which human life is clogged, is the sickness to which the body is perpetually liable. Few people pass their whole lives

While the body is

lives without being confined to a sick bed. Burning with fever or wracked with pain, the mind cannot attend with proper recollection to the errors & sins of the past life. The bed of sickness is therefore no proper time for the exercise of repentance. The prospect & apprehension of death may occasion sorrow & fear on account of an evil life, & resolutions to amend should God restore them to health. But when health returns, their sorrow is forgotten, their fears are over, & their resolutions are no more thought of. I myself have been witness to many such instances; & this is the way in which they have ended.

And where is the wonder. If death, as we may say, is in view, & hath raised the apprehensions high; if disease hath weakened temptation, & the appetites of the body are brought low; where is the wonder if fear alone should produce that sorrow which ought to arise from the sense of sin,

sin & contrition of heart for it? And if on the recovery of health, the force of temptation, & the strength of paſsion should return with the return of the strength of the body, are we to be surprised? It is the course of nature, & till renewed by the grace of true repentance — not that which sorrow of the world works — such, & no better will be the consequences, for "the sorrow of the world worketh death".

If this be the general iſsue of repentance in a fit of sickneſs, that the sick, upon the return of health, ~~generally~~ commonly returns to his former course of life, how dreadful is the state when the sickneſs itself cuts off all poſsibility of repentance from ~~the~~ a man; & gives him no opportunity even of recollecting his past life. Delirium, ſtupor, & the loſs of the mental faculties often, at least not unfrequently do this, & death ensues without a return of reason & understanding.

How strong is the argument which arises from this consideration! How ought it to impreſs us with the neceſsity of attending to the duties of religion, the concerns of eternity — to exercise that repentance, faith, holineſs, & charity, which is doing the will, working the works of him who sent us into the world, while we are in health — while the body is free from pain, & the mind undisturbed by any thing but the sense of its sins & offences against God! Penitent resolutions, holy purposes then formed come from the inspiration of the Spirit of God, & are more likely to continue & be effectual, than those hasty purposes which are formed in sickneſs, or from any other violent ~~violent~~ cause, which excites the fear of near approaching death, & will probably operate no longer than the fear shall continue.

Analogous to sickneſs is the time of old age, which, if death spares us, must come on us.

The infirmities of the body which are then increased, the dulness of the senses, of the mind & understanding, the loss or decay of memory which frequently attend this period of human life, prove it to be most unfit to begin the great duty of a religious life. "Sufficient unto that day is the evil of "it". We have no right, I wish there never arose any reason, to burden it with beginning to prepare for our eternal state. That ought to have been the employment of our whole lives; & no reasonable man, one would think, would ever put it off to the last period of it.

These considerations will, I trust, have their weight with all serious people at least, & prevail on them to attend to their duty as Christians, by living in the fear of God now while it is day, while they have their health, & understanding, & reason in their full power, & are capable of employing them in

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a buſineſs of so much importance, with certainty of ſucceſs.

[How they will affect people who are openly & notoriously vicious; or those christian profeſsors who live as it were without God in the world, who never reflect on their own sinful state, or that eternity on which they must enter when death shall take them out of this world, I know not; but fear, very little. I hope in God there are none such among those to whom I addreſs myself —]

There are particularly two more considerations respecting this subject, which may be of use to such people — On those who are better disposed they will have their effect. Remember, therefore, & I beg it may be remembered with seriouſneſs,

4. That if the concerns of religion, the care of

the soul, the one thing needful, be not duly regarded in this world, they cannot be attended to in the next world. Of this we are positively assured in the text. "I must work the works of him that sent "me, while it is day" — while the life of this world continueth — "the night," death "cometh when no "man can work." As death finds us, we must remain in the region of departed spirits; the good in rest, & peace, & happiness, such as their state of seperation from the body will permit them to enjoy; the wicked in horror, anguish, despair, till the judgment of the great day; when the final sentence of God shall be passed on them.

5. The issue of this business therefore is happiness or misery eternal; its importance then must be immense. Triffles we may disregard; they will affect us but little, & probably but a short time. But who that deserves the title of a reasonable man,

will consider eternal happineſs & misery as trifles? or neglect that mode & conduct of life in this world, which will certainly free him from all risk of misery, & secure immortal felicity to him in the world to come?

There is one more consideration on this subject, with which I shall conclude this discourse; & I flatter myself, your own sentiments will accord with me in it.

It hath pleased God the two years past to visit some parts of our country with grievous & mortal sickneſs. Some threatning appearances have this season alarmed the inhabitants in various places; nor hath this city been without its apprehensions.

I hope all this is without real cause, & that the fears & alarms that have arisen, are more owing to what particular towns have suffered the two years past, than to any ontagious ~~natural~~ sickness that now afflicts them. Yet these very apprehensions, especially when they are accompanied with the death of some of our connections or friends, ought to be considered as a call to us, & as a strong reason, to be ready to leave this mortal life when it shall please God to take us out of it. No preparation for eternity can be made by us equal to that of having done the will of God according to our best ability.

If this business hath been unhappily neglected by us, our best remedy is immediately to enter on it, & to be diligent & faithful in it.

Let not therefore vain excuses any longer deceive you, but considering what God hath commanded, do it; what he hath forbidden, & refrain from it. Recollect your past lives, & repent truly of your evil deeds & forsake them. Live in the fear of God, & in the constant worship of his holy name. Manage your business & pleasures according to the principles of your holy profession, & look to him for acceptance, with firm faith in the atonement, & thro' the mediation of Jesus Christ the Redeemer.

Consider these things; & may God give you a heart to understand, & a will to practise them; Grant you remission of your sins, comfort in death, a happy resurrection, & everlasting life in heaven. — Thro' Jesus Christ, the Redeemer & Saviour of all who trust in him; To whom with the Father & the Holy Ghost, be honour & glory forever. Amen.

N L 2 ☉ E 1801
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23 ☉ Δ 1808
5 ☉ Lent 1814

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St John 13-17

If ye know these things happy are ye if ye do them —

When our Ld celebrated his last passover with his disciples, & knowing that he was soon to depart out of the world, & being desirous of correcting that spirit of ambition & affectation of superiority which he saw prevalent among them — he condescended to give them a most striking & affecting instance of lowliness & humility in his own conduct. He rose from supper & laid aside his upper loose garment, like a servant girded himself with a towel & wased the feet of hi

Disciples. Then that they might fully comprehend
the design of what he had done, he
addreſsed himself to them in words to this
purpose. "Probably ye know not the meaning
"of what I have now done to you. Consider therefore
"the relation I stand in towards you; you
"all profeſs to reverence & obey me — you call
"me your master & your Ld, & in so doing
"ye do right, for so indeed I am, If I then
"who am your Ld & Master, have condescended
"to the lowest office of humility in washing
"your feet, ye ought also to shew the same humility
"& condescension to each other; for
"I have only given you an example, that
"ye should do as I have done to you. You
"must all perceive the reasonableneſs of imitating
"me, not only in this particular instance,
"but in fulfilling all, even the lowest
"& most servile duties of Humanity —

"you own understanding will teach you that the
'servant is not greater than his Ld, nor he that is
'sent greater than he that sent him. You cannot
'therefore think yourselves too great to attend to the
'calls & obey the dictates of humility — you cannot
'think that Condescention & Submission to each
'other will be any disgrace or reproach to you,
'for ye cannot descend lower than I have done,
'I have never required any servile office from you
'but have ever been among you as one that serveth,
& have now performed the lowest duty
'of a servant to you all. If now ye know these
'things, if ye feel the reason & propriety of what
'I have said to you — happy are ye if you act
'accordingly —

"How must the hearts of the Disciples
have glowed while their Masters words sound
in their ears? Blushing & Shame must have

taken the place of their contention, & strife for the highest [illegible] station in the Messiah's kingdom. And indeed this transaction & discourse of our S— seems to have had the most happy effect on his disciples. We read of no more disputes about greatness among them: We see no instance through their whole future conduct of any one of them affecting a superiority ~~to~~ over the rest. —

Happy would it be for us also, did we always reduce the knowledge of our duty into practice! For the observation of the text is not only true with regard to the virtues of Humility & Condescention, but in every instance, happy is the man, who knowing his duty has virtue enough to govern himself by that knowledge

Knowledge & Learning have ever been in high & deserved estimation among civilized nations, and as religion is a science of all other the most useful & necessary to man, religious knowledge has been much cultivated, by most of those persons who have been duely sensible of the importance of the subject. However advantageous this may been to the world, it certainly has not been without its inconvenience

many persons, have attained to great fame & influence in the world by their knowledge in religious matters. This hath led mankind to overate religious knowledge, & to strive hard if not for the reality at least for the appearance of it —

Some from a consciousness of their own superiority over ~~[illegible]~~ others in this particular, have become possitive in their assertions, obstinate in their opinions & unmerciful in their censures; & their whole conduct has shewn an utter contempt for the rest of mankind; literally verifying the observation of St Paul, —

That knowledge puffeth up —

Another disadvantage which is apt to arise from setting to high a value on religious knowledge is — ~~that they~~ it induces many people to study religion merely as a speculative science: that they may appear to be very learned & very religious. People of this stamp may be generally known from two circumstances — In the first place they may a point of introducing religion as a topic of conversation upon every occasion without any regard to times or seasons. They are impatient to shew their knowledge & you attend to them, or else be noted as an irreligious & profane person, who has no love for Xt or his religion — Secondly — these people are never content to converse on the plain & simple parts of Xty — but they must solve difficulties, settle controversies & explain mysteries — a conversation upon the obligations of morality, & the beauty of a virtuous & holy life has no charms for them, for they are impatient to speak upon more refined subjects, & dive into the mysteries of Faith & Good Works, Election & Reprobation &c — And I may here add another mark by which they may be easily known & that is, by a propensity to attack every one who differs from them in opinion —

These observations B.B. you will readily perceive are drawn from particular instances of the abuse of religious knowledge, or of the substituting the appearance instead of the reality & therefore they are no arguments against the thing itself — indeed they are by no means intended as such — The knowledge of our Duty must of necessity be acquired before our Duty can be performed: And we must in some degree study to make ourselves acquainted with our religion, in order to be made partakers of those benefits which it proposes to us. But we must not stop at the knowledge of our duty — we must not content ourselves with barely understanding our religion, but we must reduce that knowledge & understanding to practice —

Suppose for instance that a man should acquire all the knowledge of which human Nature is capable — Suppose he understood all the mysteries of Xty — & could give a plain & rational account of the method which G. has appointed for the redemption & salvation of the World: — But that he rested in this knowledge, & gave himself no manner of concern about complying with his duty in any instance — Would his knowledge recommend him to the favour of his G— Would his knowledge save him? — No certainly — One sigh from the heart, sent up in devotion to G— One wish of benevolence, one single effort of good-will mankind is worth it all

G— has revealed the knowledge of himself to mankind. He has made known to us the means that his mercy has provided for our salvation. He has given us the plainest rules for the regulation of our conduct — & promised never ending blessedness in a future world, to all those that obey him. Did he do all this, only to improve our understandings? to increase our fund of knowledge & to enable us to talk learnedly about these things — No, my B B. no, — It was to mend the heart, to govern the actions, that men might be made capable of future happiness with their H F — If you look into the law & the Gospel, if you examine the Bible from one end to the other, you will find no one promise made to the knowledge of your duty distinct from the practice of it. Punishment is denounced against those who know their Duty but do it not — but bleſsedneſs is promised ~~to~~ only upon the condition mentioned in the text — If ye know these things happy are ye if ye do them —

I hope B B that you have rightly understood me, in what I have been discoursing to you upon — but lest you should not, I shall take the liberty of exemplifying it, in considering your own situation

You have the bleſsing to belong to a Church where you have every poſsible advantage of knowing the will & pleasure of G— — The books of divine revelation are regularly read for your instruction whenever you meet together — & so judiciously selected, in the Leſsons, psalms, epistles & gospels — continually alluding either to some eminent mercy vouchsafed by G—

to his chosen people, or to some punishment threatened to Sin & Wickedness; that it is utterly impossible that you should be ignorant of your real interest as it respects your eternal welfare — It is impossible but what you must before this, have become acquainted with the terms of salvation which the B J has offered to the world — & be well assured that knowing to the direfull punishments that hangs over you if you neglect so great salvation —

To this I may also, add; that the greater part of those who are now present, have enjoyed, the instruction of one, whose learning & abilities fully qualified him, for the honorable place he filled — — How often has ~~the~~ the eloquence of his lips, flowed in such a strong & nervous manner from this sacred desk, as if he, would enter the hearts of his hearers, & ~~so~~ seize the man of sin & drag him from his strong holds? how many hours has he spent in exhibiting in their natural & most & most pleasing appearance the many promises made by our Good & Gracious G— ~~that~~ to us miserable mortals, that he might if win & allure & gentle lead you into the way of holiness — The words of peace & comfort & consolation he poured into the wounded & afflicted heart — & taught it to bear adversity like a Man, — shewing that the scences of this ~~Life~~ life, however perplexed & perturbed — will be repaid an hundred fold, to those who continue constant unto the end, in those ~~sun~~ regions of bliss prepared for the righteous —

~~[illegible]~~ ~~Will~~ Can you now say, that having all the advantages, you are not instructed in the commandments of G— & that you do not know & understand the law G— surely you cannot— let it be remembered then what our redeemer hath said to the antient Jews — If I had not come & spoken unto them, they had not had sin — but now they have no cloak for their sin —

If therefore ye know these things — happy are ye if ye do them — If having greater advantages for instruction than others, & by this means gained greater knowledge, it will be to your eternal happineſs, if you practice according to your knowledge — but if not, if you rest in your knowledge without joining your practice to it, then know that there is no cloak for your sin —

Let us then beg of A G. the grace of his holy Sp. to guard us againſt the vanity of placing all our religion in theory & knowledge & to enable us to practice what we know — Then shall we delight, not only to study the law of G— & to meditate upon it, but also to run in the way of his commandments & to do those things that please him. Then too shall we have peace of conscience & confidence towards G— in this World — & in the world to come shall be made partakers of his heavenly treasure —.

Bp Seabury & Sh-k

Rom 8 12.13

30 Oct – 1804
—1816

Brethren we are debtors not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh ye shall die. But if ye through the spirit do mortify the deeds of the Body ye shall live —

It is well known that the ~~pr~~ principal design of St. Paul in the Epistles to the Romans & Galatians was to convince the Jews in general & particularly those who had embraced the Xan religion of the superiority of that religion over the Mosaic, thereby to induce them to give up the observation of the Mosaic rites & institutions, which they scrupulously obeyed, even after they became Xans & to depend solely on the Redemption & Attonement of J. for justification with G. & for eternal life in the World to come. The arguments he uses are various & cannot all be brought into full view in the compass of a Sermon. I shall therefore at this time confine myself to that pre-eminence he ascribes to the Gospel, (by which word is here meant the whole Xan economy) over the Jewish law, because it secures to them remission of Sins in this life, & a happy immortality in the next; neither of which, he tells them was to be obtained by the Mosaic law—

The first of these, remission of Sins, or a release on the part of A.G. from the guilt & punishment of Sin, is what is by this Ap. not unfrequently called Justification; this benefit he says Xt obtained for us, by his becoming our Sin offering; by the sacrafice of himself, making the only full & complete expiation for Sin; & thereby freeing us from that condemnation to death which is due to the whole human race. All that had sinned, that had done the work of Sin, & therefore must receive its wages, which he had before said was death (6-23) He proves this to be the peculiar priviledge of the Gospel, by shewing what G. had done to effect it— what the law could not do— give life & deliverance from death— in that it was weak through the flesh— the weakness of the flesh, subjecting us to the transgression of the law, & so to death, G. sending his own Son in the likeness of Sinful flesh — did accomplish, & for Sin, by an offering for Sin, condemned Sin in the flesh, & thereby took away its power to condemn us, that condemnation which was due to us for Sin, being laid upon & borne by him who was our substitute — that the righteousness of the law — that inward purity & holiness which the law required might be performed & fulfilled in & by us, who walk not after the appetites of the flesh, but after or according to the motions or suggestions of the Sp. — For they that are of the flesh — live according to the appetites of the flesh — do mind the things of the flesh — they affect & love & pursue carnal things, such as gratify & delight the appetites of the body — but they that are after the Sp. that live according to the motions of the Sp. do affect, desire & pursue the tempers & dispositions & habits of holiness— For to be carnally minded is death but to be spiritually minded is life & peace

And this life & peace cannot be attained by them that are carnally minded, because the carnal mind is enmity against G. (7) is that which sets & keeps us at enmity with G. for it is not subject to the law of G. neither indeed can it be. While therefore we have this carnal Mind, & affect, desire & pursue the gratification of the appetites of our fallen Nature, we are at enmity with G. So then they that are in the flesh that mind only fleshly gratification cannot please G. but live in enmity against him. (8) But ye Xans are not in the flesh but in the Sp. & so not at enmity but at peace with G.— if so be that the Sp. of G. dwell in you— but not otherwise – for if any Man have not the Sp. of Xt dwelling in him, he is none of his (9) But if Xt be in you, by his sp. dwelling in you, the body is dead indeed, i.e. mortal, because of Sin – but the sp. is life – the sp. of Xt dwelling in you will give life to the body again, because of righteousneſs – because of that justification or perfect remiſsion of Sin which we have through the attonement of Xt (10) For if the sp. of him that raised up Xt from the dead, by his sp. dwelling in him – shall also quicken, raise to life your mortal bodies by his sp. that dwelleth in you (11) whereby brethren we are debtors – we are under obligation, are bound, not to the flesh to live after the flesh, but to the sp. to live after the sp. – For if ye live after flesh ye shall die, shall be subject to Death as the punishment of Sin, consequently to the second death: But if ye thro' the sp. of Xt that dwelleth in you, do mortify the deeds of the body, the carnal Mind which is enmity against G., ye ~~sh~~ shall live, & your bodies shall be raised to eternal life, For as many as are led or governed, i.e obey the sp. of G. they are the Sons of G. & no more nor any others For ye Sons have not received the sp. of ~~adoption~~ bondage again to fear, i.e to be in fear of death, as was the case of those who were under the law, because that threatened every one with death, who continued not in perfect obedience to every precept, but ye have received the sp of adoption & so are made Sons of G. through Xt by the sp. which ~~ye~~ we have received— whereby we cry Abba, Father, & so having G. for our F. are assuredly heirs of his heavenly inheritance, through the resurrection from the dead. For the Sp. itself beareth witneſs with our sp. that we are the children of G. The sp. of G. is the sp. of holineſs & enables us to work holineſs, to do those things that are pleasing to G. to mortify the deeds of the body – to fulfill the righteousneſs of the law – to cry Abba F.. And when our own Minds & consciences, testifies that we do love & obey the will of G. that we do mortify the evil lusts & appetites of the body, then does the sp. of G., & then only bear witneſs with our spirits that we are the children of G. & if children then heirs, heirs of G. & joint heirs with Xt of the heavenly inheritance – if so-be, we suffer with him, live in self denial & the mortification of the sinful appetites of the body, & in the patient endurance of afflictions & persecutions, especially those that happen to us for religion & for conscience sake, because we hereby become conformed, to the Image of the Son of G. are made like to him in temper & disposition, so that we may be glorified together with him.

I have now b b. run through a short exposition of the Ap. discours previous to the text that you might see the connection & force of his reasoning, & may distinguish what he says absolutely, from what he affirms only conditionally or under certain restrictions.

Among the former stands the redemptio of Xt. He took the whole human Nature upon him, & in it tasted death for every Man, making a full, perfect & sufficient oblation & satisfaction, for the Sins of the whole worl original & actual. So that all Sin of every kind & degree, & of all persons, is now capable of remiſsion & forgiveneſs through him.

But then the benefits of this redemption are ours only on certain conditions, or under certain limitations. *There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Xt J.* To be in Xt J. is to beleive in him, & in the profeſsion of that faith, to be baptised in his Name, & made a member of his ~~C~~ Church or Body. To this faith remiſsion of all past sins ~~are~~ is promiſsed. *Arise said An~~n~~anias to Saul & be baptised & wash away thy Sins.* And St Peter to the Jews on the feast of Penticost- *Repent & be baptised &c*- To this faith, you the promise of the H. Gt. is made. Yet these priviledges & promises are not absolute. For they who are thus in Xt J. to be entitled to them, *must walk not after the flesh, but after the sp.* - *must be led by the spirit of G.* - must mortify the deeds of the body - must be spiritually minded, or it cannot be said upon the Ap. principles that there is no condemnation to them. For according to him, to be carnally Minded, to be in the flesh -is death. The Sp. therefore is given us, for the sanctification of the heart i.e, to be in us a principle of new & holy living. As therefore Redemption puts us into a capacity of being saved, & makes that possible which without it, is impossible, so the sanctification of the heart by the sps of G. which is one of the principles of Xts mediation qualifies us for, & gives us a title to salvation through Xt. Justifying grace or the remission of Sin, releases us from the penalty of all past sin, but it leaves us there as poor & weak & frail creatures, as liable to sin again & consequently again to fall under the displeasure of G. as we were before. Sanctifying Grace or the influences of the sp. of G. which is the sp. of holiness, here takes us up, & by correcting ~~the [illegible]~~ the corrupt principles called the flesh, which in ~~it~~ truth means the desires & propensities to Sin, deliver us from the power & dominion of Sin, so that we shall no longer be held in subjection ~~to~~ by it; but shall be brought thro' ~~by~~ the sp. into the liberty of the Sons of G. & be enabled to obey that holy & good law of G. which reason & conscience approve, but through the weakneſs of Nature & the dominion of Sin, are without the sp. of G. unable to fulfill.

Redemption & Sanctification, are both neceſsary therefore to render our salvation complete, & effectual. By the one the penalty of our Sins is paid & we are set at liberty: by the other, our Natures are made holy & fit for the enjoyment of Gs. kingdom.

Another thing promiſsed absolutely to all Men through Xt. is the resurrection of the body — As in Adam all die — so in Xt shall all be made alive. All Men therefore shall rise again from the dead — But here this absolute promise stops & leaves all Men opposed to the Judgement of G. which is to follow & by which their future state will be determined. And here St Paul speaks in exact conformity to the doctrine of Xt himself—

The hour is coming when all that are in th their graves shall hear his voice (the voice of the Son of G.) *& shall come forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, & they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation* — The Resurrection then is promised absolutely: But the life after the resurrection is only conditionally promised: according to our S. phrase to those who have done good: According to St Paul, to them who walk or live after the Sp. — to them who live under the law or power of the Sp. of life — to them that mind ie, desire & pursue the things of the Sp. — to them who thro the Sp. do mortify the deeds of the body, — all sinfull appetites & propensities — to them who are led by the sp. of G. To those he says there is now no condemnation. But to those of a contrary disposition, who walk after the flesh, who are carnally minded — their condemnation remaineth — they shall die, not only the death of the body, for to that all must submit the good & the bad, the righteous & the wicked; but the punishment of their Sins remaineth & shall be inflicted upon them — For says the ap. to be carnally minded is death, it leads to death which is the wages of Sin, the same with damnation or being condemned of G. & he adds the reason — Because the carnal mind is enmity against G. is not subject to the law of G. nor indeed can be — So that they that are in the flesh — that live according to the dictates of their fallen Nature — cannot please & consequently cannot be happy with him.

We must therefore carefully distinguish between the redemption of Xt & Salvation through him, for they are very different in their Nature & meaning

Redemption is absolute; all Men from the begining to the end of the World are redeemed & put into a capacity of Salvation. But this Salvation is conditional, & is promised to our faith & repentance, & in our living in obedience to the motions of G. H Sp. which we receive through Xt. We must also distinguish between the atonement for Sin, which Xt hath made, & the benefits of it. The attonement is absolute: He made full & perfect satisfaction for the Sins of the whole World. But the benefits are conditional; faith in Xt, when G. calls us thereto by the preaching of the Gospel: & repentance, or the giving of ourselves up to be governed & led by his sp. in the denial of ungodliness & worldly lust— the mortification of the deeds of the body,—& in minding, desiring & pursuing the things of the sp.,—for that is to be spiritually minded which he says leads to life & peace—

And then *the sp. itself*—the very sp. of G. which gives us ability to obey the law of G. & fulfill all righteousness—*will bear witness with our sp.*—our Mind & conscience; by wh we do know that we love & obey the law of G.—*that we are the children of G. & if children then heirs—heirs of G. & joint heirs with Xt, if so be that we suffer with him that we may be also glorified together with him*

Romans 8 - 17

And if children then heirs, heirs of G. & joint heirs with Xt; if so-be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together

St. Paul's discourse which introduces the text, was the subject of the Sermon in the Morning; Little therefore will need be said at present to shew its connection with what goes before in this chapter: And whatever may be necessary, may readily be attended to, by way of reference as we go along -

To be the children of G. is always described as one of the greatest privileges of the Gospel. And it is just & right it be so, for it carries in it the idea of all the priviledges of children, present protection & provision & future inheritance in our Fs house.

This was the natural state of Man by creation: But this state we lost by the apostacy of Adam; by which we became children of wrath, were set at enmity against G. became servants of Sin & heirs of everlasting misery.

This state of children of G. therefore no longer belongs to us by Nature, but is the effects of Gs. mercy & grace through Xt. And therefore our being put into it, is called the grace of adoption, & our entrance into it regeneration, or being born again into a new state, being begotten again ~~in~~to a new life & to new hopes & expectations. As we receive this new life & these new hopes & expectation through the mercy of G. in Xt— He is our F. who begets us, we his children begotten of him. We are born again (says St Peter) not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible by the word of G. which *liveth & abideth forever* (1-1.2.3) The means which G. uses to beget us to this new & heavenly life, is the giving us his Sp. — The powers that belong to this new life, are the influences of the Sp. & therefore are we said to *be born of the Sp.* — He is also discribed as the pledge of our resurrection to future immortality, & the security of our heavenly inheritance —

If the Sp. of him that raised up J. from the dead dwell in you he that raised up Xt from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Sp. — the same *Sp. that dwelleth in you* (v 11) & again (v 14) *As many as are led by the Sp. of G. they are the Sons or children of G.* — *& if children then heirs* — —

And this gives us a rule to know most aſsuredly whether we are the children of G. If we are led by his Sp. we are his children — Now his Sp. as was observed in the morning] is the Sp. of holiness — the Sp. that was in Xt. J. — the Sp. that enables us to mortify the deeds of the body. to fulfill the righteousness. the inward purity of Gs law — & to perfect holiness in the fear of G: His fruits are love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, fidelity, meekness, temperance. If this Sp. be in us, these effects & fruits will appear. Every Man knows best his own Mind & conscience, & can therefore best tell, whetthether this be the ~~st~~ state of his heart, & the isue of his life & conversation. He must judge himself. & if he do judge honestly, it will be no hard matter for him to determine whether he be a child of G. or not. If he be not, it is then time for him to look to himself.

If he go upon any other plan, it will

deceive him & leave him exposed to the vengeance of G. — In this way he will be safe & have the comfortable testimony of the Sp. too, that he is the child of G. — *for the Sp.* itself — the very same Sp. *bears witneſs with our Sp. that we are the children of G.* — It is by the power of G's Sp. that we are delivered from the slavery of Sin & are set at liberty, & inabled to do those things which reason & conscience approve — to love & delight in the law of G. — which no unregenerate person, sold under sin, (i.e.) the bondsman of Sin can do. When therefore we do love & delight in the law of G. do obey G. do mortify the deeds of the body, then have we the witneſs of G's Sp. that we are regenerate persons, & the children of G. by adoption & grace, because all these are the effects of his presence or dwelling in us. And when we are conscious to ourselves that this is the state of our hearts, & the tenor of our lives, then have we too, the witness of our own Sp, or mind that we are the children of G. And if children then heirs &c & consequently through him entitled to the inheritance of eternal life, in our Fs heavenly Kingdom

This life eternal which is to be obtained thro' the redemption of Ct, & by the dwelling of the holy Sp. in us - (i e) thro' faith & holiness, is mentioned to us in the scriptures under several figures, or expressions alluding to the customs of Men, especially in the adoption of one from another stock, to keep up the Name & family ~~into~~ which he is taken — Somtimes it is represented as a gift, as in the 6th chapr. of this Epistle — *The gift of G. is eternal life through J. Xt our Lord.* And it is right & proper that we should consider as such & be highly thankful to G for it. A Gift supposes the giver to be at perfect liberty either to bestow or withhold it — if he gives it is a favour & confers an obligation. If he does not give, no injury is done & no right of complaint afforded. This consideration should humble us under a sense of our sins, & excite us to praise & give thanks to G. that he does not deal with us according to our Sins, nor punish us according to our iniquities, but hath magnified his grace & mercy toward us, not only in not executing vegeance upon us, but in conferring happiness upon us, which we neither do, nor can deserve —

Sometimes eternal life is repre-

-sented to us. under the notion of a reward or recompense;— the holy Sp. intending thereby to stir up our obedience, & make us faithfull & diligent in our masters service: For as we are sons of G. by the Sp. of adoption so are we the servants of G. creation, by the right of redemption for we are bought with a price, the blood of Xt, & are therefore his servants who paid the price for us. But a purchased servant we know is entitled to no reward; all that he receives is from the good will & mere favour of his master— And if his master promise him a reward for his fidelity & diligence, it ought certainly to animate his hopes, & quicken his endeavour to do every thing to please so good & gracious a master— Still however the reward is of grace or favour & not of debt—

for when we have done all, we can do, & could we do all we ought to do, we are only unprofitable servants, & have done *only what was our duty to do*, had no reward been promised

But in the text the highest title to eternal life is held out to us, under the figure of the inheritance of children — *Then are we heirs* &c Now if we be joint heirs with Xt, then we are exalted to the rank of *first born* children, to whom a double portion of their fathers substance, was, among the Jews allotted. How great reason, — how undoubted a right then have good sons, they who are led by the Sp. of G., to cry *Abba* i e F— To put their trust in him with the confidence of children; to pour out their complaints & supplications before him, to beg the continuance of the H. Sp. to them; to

plead

their title to his favour & kindness to them —& to assure themselves of the remission of their sins, & of an inheritance with the Saints in glory ——— But let us remember that, though all the promises of Xt are *yea* & *amen* – sure & certain & his purposes unchangeable, – yet a child, an heir may forfeit his inheritance by some after-act, that disqualifies him to inherit.

To say that we cannot fall from a state of grace, & that he, that now is a child of G. can never cease to be so, is contradicting both reason & scripture. We may learn as much from the Ap. reasoning – *The Sp. itself beareth witness with our Sp. that we are the children of G. &c* – & in the Epistle *to Titus 3 Chap 7 v* he tell us – *We are heirs, according to the hope of eternal life.* And in the 24 verse of this Ch. he says

We are saved by hope. Now certainty puts an end to hope — for hope that is seen is not hope — it is enjoyment — For, argueth the Ap. — what a Man seeth (i.e.) enjoyeth, why doth he yet hope for? Being children then, makes us heirs only through hope: but the hope of what is future, is not certainty — Our certainty of our being the children of G. goes no farther than our present state — all beyond is hope. And this is enough, greater might make us negligent

This is sufficient to excite us — To work out our Salvation with fear & trembling & to run with patience the race that is set before us

Let us remember also — that tho' good Xans, are the children of G. yet they are children under age, & therefore differ nothing from a servant, but must be under tutors & governours, 'till the time appointed by the Father; that they may receive a proper education; & be fitted by instruction & discipline, to enjoy their inheritance when they come to it. Now the time appointed by our heavenly Fr. for us to receive our inheritance is at the resurrection of the just. For thus the Ap. arguments proceeds— The adopted children of G. are heirs of G. & joint heirs with Xt, & so shall reign with him— But they must sleep in death, & consequently cannot reign with Xt, 'till they live again by rising from the dead— that their adoption is the redemption of their bodies, from corruption (v 23) & they receive the Sp. of adoption in this life, as the earnest & pledge of their future resurrection to life.— And that we are completely the children of G. when we are the children of the resurrection (Luke 20.36) Being now heirs through hope— When we shall have finished our Spiritual war-

-fare & have overcome, then shall our sonship be completed. As it is writen [Rev 21-7] He that overcometh shall inherit all things, & I will be his G. & he shall be my son — but the fearful — the slothful or wicked, & unbelieving & the abominable & murderers, & whoremongers & sorcerers & Idolaters & all liars, shall have their part, in the lake which burneth with fire & brimstone — which is the second death. It is therefore our interest as well as our duty, to submit cheerfully with a willing mind, to that state of discipline, in which our H. F. hath thought good to place us, in this World — To bear patiently all ~~his~~ our vexations & crosses & afflictions, & to resist steadily in the fear of G. all temptations to murmuring & repining at the will of our H F. or that can any way lead us to sin against him. The author of the text, in his epistle to the Hebrews says expressly (12-10) That G.

chastises his children for their profit, to make them partakers of his holineſs. And the text saith we shall be glorified together with Xt, if so be we suffer with him.

And in the last place let us remember that in consequence of the hope of that glorious inheritance to which our spiritual adoption entitles us, it is our duty to withdraw our affections from the things of this World where at best we have only a precarious inheritance, & can enjoy it only for a little time; & to fix them on the heavenly inheritance, which we expect as joint heirs with Xt. To cease from that carnal mind which is enmity against G. & study to acquire & increase the spiritual mind which is life & peace with him.

Let us therefore as good & dutiful children resign ourselves to the will of our H. F. & be content that his Wisdom should be our director, & his providence our conductor through this uncertain World — Then shall his spirit be our support, & his loving kindness our reward - then may we hope that G. will grant our petitions - & that as his providence ordereth all things in heaven & in earth, so he will be pleased to put away from us all things hurtful & give us those things that be profitable for us, through J. X our L—

N L – Whitsunday 1799 –
20 Δ 1806
17 Δ '09
Both ——— 1843

No. 1.

1 Cor. 4. 1,2. Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required ~~of~~ in stewards that a man be found faithful. — Vid. Cor. & Reform.

1. The light in which the Apostle requires that he himself & his fellow-labourers should be considered — as ministers of Christ & stewards of the mysteries of God.

2. The requisite qualification of stewards — That a man be found faithful.

The Apostle requires to be accounted. I. a minister of Christ. — II. a Steward of the mysteries of God.

I. Clergymen are ministers of Christ.

1. In respect of the ~~commission &~~ Autho-

rity under which they act — derived from Christ by mediate ſucceſsion of ordination, & participating in the powers of that commiſsion, Go & make diſciples of all nations &c: — The places they fill, & the offices they sustain in the Church, being from him, to be executed in his name, & under his directions contained in S. S.

2. As they are the rulers & governors of the Xx, under Xt. the ſupreme & all powerful head. Who ſent them as his Father ſent him.

3. As they are his embaſsadors to the world, empowered to declare the terms of reconciliation — to perſuade men to embrace them, & to direct them how to obtain the benefit of them.

4. As they are, in Xts name, interceſsors with God for his people.

II. Clergymen are ſtewards of the mysteries of God.

1. As they are the authorised dispensers of the word, i.e. preachers of the great mystery of Godliness — God manifest in the flesh — virtually containing all the mysteries of Xnity. In a dispensation which reconciles the justice & mercy of God — which declares the will of a being infinite in wisdom, holiness & goodness, to such a fallen degenerate sinful race, & of such limited understandings as we are, there must be mysteries — the trinity, the incarnation, the forgiveness of sins, the operations of the H. S., the resurrection of the body &c: —

2. As they are dispensers of the Sacraments, called, especially the Communion, by the primitive Xns, the Sacred Mysteries. And, in a limited sense, of the Gifts & Graces of the H. S. & of the Blessing of God.

In the discharge of their office, they are under every obligation to be faithful

1. The honour of alm. God is concerned in the due & faithful execution of their ministry.

2. The efficacy of Xt's redemption.

3. The temporal & eternal happiness of men.

Their fidelity must be shewn,

explaining their own commission

1. In declaring the whole will of God, & fully making known the oeconomy of redemption, to the people committed to their charge, according to the S. S.; & warnings of ye danger of rejecting it.

2. In doing this sincerely, without mixing any of their own conceits with it.

3. In doing it diligently on every proper occasion; & fervently, meekly, & temperately — in opposition to luke-warmness, arrogance & intollerance. Giving the greatest weight to essentials, & ranging every doctrine & duty in its proper

place, & enforcing them with juſt & candid reaſons, & ſober diſpaſsionate arguments.

4. By living agreeably to their profeſsion; in holineſs simplicity & modesty — being examples in faith & practice — not lording it over the faith & conſciences of others — ſeeking the welfare, not the wealth of their hearers — the glory & approbation of God, not the praise & commendation of men.

5. By private admonition &c:

6. By administering the H. ſacraments & ~~all~~ performing ~~all~~ the offices of religion, on all proper occaſions, with due gravity ſolemnity & devotion — viſiting & comforting the ſick & troubled in mind, & relieving the poor & oppreſsed, as their best ability ſhall enable them.

~~7. By explaining~~ Inferences.

1. The duty of the people to attend on their ministry, & ſubmit to their instructions

while they continue to prosecute with fidelity the great work of their ministry.

2. To bear with their infirmities, — not aggravating their errors or faults, but covering the instances of their indiscretion, weakness or inadvertency — remembering that they are men of the same nature & passions with themselves, though set to watch over their souls, & promote their salvation.

3. That they provide for their support according to their ability, — that they may be enabled to live decently, to exercise hospitality to all, liberality to the poor, and, without too anxious attention to the world, to provide, according to their station, for their families, when it shall please God to take them out of this world.

Mrs. Earle at Revd. Dutton's Esqr. Windsor
Jno. Ronald mason Aberdeen. —

June 8. 1812.

Take heed therefore how ye hear.

The importance of the Subject.

The duty of the people, to hear

1. With attention, & a desire to be instructed.
2. With seriousness, & a resolution to believe & practice whatever shall appear to be their duty.
3. Without prejudice against, or partiality in favour of the Preacher.
Doctrine of preacher – false – only moral –
4. With faith in the goodness, the promises & the threatnings of God.
5. With Prayer & resignation of the heart to God, to be governed & directed by his will.

~~6 With diligence, induced to~~ Conclusion the duty of the people to come to Church that they may be instructed, ~~is to be considered~~.

Gal. 3d, 6, 7.

— Abraham beleived God, & it was accounted — imputed — unto him for righteouſneſs. Know ye therefore, that they which are of faith, the ſame are the children of Abraham. — Vid. Gen. 15. 6 — Rom. 4. 3, 9, 22 — Ja^s. 2. 23 — Rom. 4. 11, 12, 16.

1. What is meant by the phraſe beleived God. Inſtances of Ab^s faith — his leaving his fathers houſe — ſojourning in Canaan — beleiving he ſhould have a ſon by Sarah — Offering up this ſon Iſaac.

2. What is meant by — accounted or imputed, to him for righteouſneſs, i.e. ~~the~~ his beleif, or faith.

3. What is meant by they which are of faith.

4 ——— by children of Abraham

concluſ.

Conclusion — They who believe God, as Abm believed God, shall have their faith or belief accounted to them for righteousness, as Abm had his faith accounted to him for righteousness —

Inferences & improvement.

1. Abm by Gods command left Haran, a land of idolatry — We are to renounce ye love & spirit of this world wch is enmity wt God.
2. Abm sojourned in Canaan the land of promise, but inhabited by Amorites & Canaanites, wicked people, without being corrupted by them in his religion or learning their vices — We sojourn in this world in Xsts Kx or kingdom, wch is to us what Canaan was to Abm, & as the promise of actual possession was future to his seed, our promise of actual i.e. full & permanent happy possession of Xsts & heavenly kingdom, or Canaan, is future i.e. in the

next life – to obtain it, we must live in Xst's kingdom here, now infested with false religions, (erroneous principles) & wicked members, without being corrupted by heresy, schism or error, or ~~being~~ learning or living in their vices & sinful practices.

3. Abm sojourning in Canaan served God faithfully in religion & morals, according to those revelations, institutions & laws which God gave him – We must sojourn in Xst's Chh here on earth, serving God faithfully, in religion & morals according to that revelation, & those institutions & laws which God has given us by his son.

enjoy after the resurrection.

Lectures

That neither the world nor man eternal, but created. From the things + that are seen — the visible creation, is to inferred a Creator. From their magnitude his power. From their order — his wisdom. From their use — his goodness. From their regular continuance — his providence. — The nature of man — vegable in his nourishment & groth — animal in his life & functions — rational in his mind or soul.

God had given on mount Sinai, & by his servant Moses. Enoch then pleased God by walking in ~~his ways~~ to him or in his ways — i.e. by fearing God, & keeping the commands — receiving & observing the revelations that God had made.

28 Ps 5 53:

Gal. 3. 6, 7.

Abraham believed God, & it was &c:—

See & compare, Gen. 15. 6.—Rom. 4. 3, 9, 11, 12, 16, 22.—James, 2. 23.—

To explain

1. What is meant by the phrase *believed God*.

Instances of Ab.s faith— leaving his fathers house, at the command of God, abandoning all the advantages of family, acquaintance connections &c:— sojourning in Canaan among strangers— believing confidently he should have a son by his wife Sarah — offering up this son at the command of God. —— Ab.s Character.

Second Discourse—

2. What is meant by Ab.s faith or belief being *accounted unto him for righteousness*—

1. It was the foundation of right principles, tempers & dispositions.

2. It produced actual obedience to the will of God when made known.

3. What is meant by they which are of faith.

4. What is meant by children of Abm.

Concluſions from the ~~above~~ conſiderations—
That they who believe God as Abm believed God, ſhall have their faith accounted to them for righteouſneſs, as Ab. had his faith accounted unto him for righteouſneſs.

Third Diſcourſe, being

Inferences from & improvement of the former.

1. Ab. at the command of God, left Haran, an idolatrous country.— We at the command of God are to renounce the temper & ſpirit of the world, becauſe its love is enmity with God.

2. Ab. at the command of God, ſojourned in Canaan, at that time inhabited by Amorites, & Canaanites, idolators in religion & wicked in practice, without being corrupted by them in his religion, or learning their vices;— God having promiſed to bleſs him ~~& make of him~~ & give that country to his deſcendants, if he would walk before him with an

upright & sincere heart. — We are at God's command to sojourn in Hss Hx or kingdom in this world, which is infested with idolatry, heresy, schism, false doctrines & wicked members, without having our religion corrupted or learning their vicious practices, & God has promised to bless us, & give us the possession of H[is] heavenly kingdom in the next life, if in this we walk before him in faith & uprightness of heart.

3. Ab. while sojourning in Canaan served God faithfully in Religion & in Morals, according to those revelations and Laws which God gave him — We while sojourning in Hss xx militant here on earth, must serve God faithfully in religion & morals, according to that revelation, & those laws which he has given us by his Son.

Abm believed in the mediator to come — we in him already come. — God spoke to him personally — to us by his Son J.C. & A. confirmed by miracles &c.

(2)^{1}.

II. 2 Cor. 4.18.

While we look not at the things that are seen, &c.

The natural desire of happiness in man, strong & various. Only two general sources in this life, body & mind. The first inferior to ye latter. Religion a struggle between sense & faith.

I. Men ought not to seek their happiness from ye things of the world — the objects of sense, because they are temporal, and

1. It is uncertain whether we shall obtain them, though we should seek them.
2. It is not certain they would make us happy though we should obtain them.
3. It is not ~~un~~certain we shall keep them should they make us happy.
4. It is uncertain how long our life will continue, & certain that it must soon end; so that should we seek, & obtain, & be happy in the enjoyment of the things of sense, we must soon leave them.

~~II. Men ought to look at the things that are not ſeen, & make them the object of their purſuit, becauſe being eternal, they are;~~

~~1. Stable in their continuance.~~

~~2. They are certainly to be obtained. God having promiſed ſucceſs to our faithful endeavours.~~

~~3. They are capable of making us happy, being fitted to our nature by him who made us.~~

~~4. They are endleſs in their duration, & therefore ſuited to that immortality we are to enjoy after the reſurrection.~~

# \# \# \# \# \# \# \# \#

III.

Rom. XIV. 10. But why doſt thou judge thy brother? or why doſt thou ſet &c:

To judge, in the general meaning implies only the forming an opinion, & may be very inocent; but in the S.s when applied to men is always uſed in an evil ſenſe, for raſh judging, cenſoriouſneſs, impertinently intruding our opinion & wantonly condemning others, without authority, knowledge, mercy or charity.

This conduct we ought to refrain from ourſelves, & to diſcountenance in others, being,

I. Injurious to others, tending to hurt

1. Their reputation. 2 Their intereſt & families

3. ~~Their~~ To hinder their future happineſs.

II. Prejudicial to ourſelves, — destroying the peace of our own minds — the principles of charity & benevolence, & expoſing us to the effects of reſentment & revenge,

III. Hatefull to God. — expoſing us to his judgment, who has reſerved to himſelf the right to judge & to punish his own ſervants, & hath delegated this right to none but Christ: Ergo,

As we are all to ſtand before the judgment ſeat of Christ we ought to attend to our own conduct, & ſee that we be able to abide the exactneſs of his judgment, who has told us that with what meaſure we meet. &c: .

(6)

IV.

~~S. Matt. 3. 15 — Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness. Then he suffered him.~~

~~Introduction, the Birth, education, appearance & preaching of the J. Bt. — Xt not personally known to the Bt. — Xt presenting himself no collusion between them. — Probably Xts having no sins to confess the circumstance from which S. Jno. conjectured who he was. — S Jno ready acquiescence in our saviours reply *suffer it* &c: a strong indication of the rectitude of his heart.~~

~~Righteousness twofold. 1 With regard to God. 2. wt Regard to men.~~

~~I. With Regard to God: Righteousness consists in obedience to him in all his commands, & institutions; not only in the matter, but in the manner. i.e. We must not only do what God commands, but do it in the manner he commands.~~

~~II. With Regard to Men: Righteousness consists in fulfilling all the duties of justice & charity.~~

~~Xt fulfilled all righteousness in both senses. He perfectly fulfilled the moral Law / Quære did he~~

he thereby free us from the law of unsinning obedience; & put us under the law of Grace, by wch unfeigned obedience is accepted instead of unsinning. As by fulfilling the Mosaic law, & instituting he took it away, & has put us und the ~~y~~ lawes & institutions of his Gospel) & submitted to all ye positive institutions of Gods religion, &

I. To Circumcision; because tho he had no sin of his own, yet being our sponsor, & sin-offering, he must fulfil all righteousness, even that of the Mosaic law. And also because it ~~being~~ was typical of him &c:

II. To S Johns Baptism, because Jno was a prophet & sent of God to preach & call men to repentance, as preparative to their receiving ~~Xt~~ & his Gospel. In submitting to the baptism of ye Bt. (tho he had no sin to repent of) he fulfilled righteousness by obeying the will of God: And thereby taught us to exercise penitence, & live in obedience to Gods will.

III. To the authority of the Jewish Priests &c &c. Observing their festivals, as well those ordained by the authority of the Jse, as immediately by

God. Because ye Ch^x in such appointment & acts from authority of God delegated to her. In so doing he hath taught us to do so &c:

This example ought to excite & oblige us to imitate him in fulfilling all righteousness as he did. Particularly in submitting to

I. Baptism:

II. Confirmation:

III. The H. Eucharist:

IV. The Government & discipline of his Ch^x in confession & absolution ~~For~~ For, ~~All~~ all these are intended to procure, & are by his appointment actually conducive to remission of Sins thro' Xt. Jesus our L. & S. Cui sit Gloria.

V.

Matt. 13. 30. Let both grow together untill the harvest. &c.

Scope of the parable, to show that there must while the w. is as it is, & the constitution of things continues as at present, there must be a mixture of G. & B. men in the world.

This no impeachment of God's providence or justice Because wicked men cannot be punished in this world without

~~involving the good in their punishment — Pestilence, famine, earthquakes & war, no just discernment between the righteous & the wicked~~

V.

Gen. 4. 7.

If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? & if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door.

To Enquire,

1. On what account Cain & Abel brought their offerings.
2. Whether they or Adam officiated as Priest?
3. Why Cains offering was rejected & Abels accepted.

Ps. 87 — 2

The Lord loveth the Gates of Sion, more than all the dwellings of Jacob.

Exordium — The occasion of the solemnity — The common practice of mankind of consecrating places to the God of heaven, for the celebration of his worship, most probably derived from his positive command — altars — Groves & Temples. Noahs altar — Abram's altars & Groves — Isaac — Jacobs — his Bethel —

— The Mosaic Tabernacle — Solomons Temple — Zorobabels — Herods — The Synagogues. The heathen temples &c: probably imitations. Xns — Xces in the apostles times — in persecutions — Severesined. Propriety of their being neat & decently adorned — Liberality to them commended. ~~Must not~~ Dedication — Consecration — Must not be prophaned by common use, much less by wicked actions, because, tho' they have no intrinsic holiness, they are Gods property, either by reservation or donation. Inherent & relative holiness how distinguished. The phrases — Gates of Sion — dwellings of Jacob — explained. God loves the gates of Sion because of his property therein — because of the worship there paid him, recognising him to be the Creator & governor of all things &c: Prayer &c: more acceptable in Xces than elsewhere. — In what sense God there more immediately present. Attendance of his Angels explained. Our duty to frequent d. service in the Xce, on acct of the prayers, praises, Word & Sacraments of God. Reverence &c: — Thanks due to God for this house — Thanks & honor to the builders.

Baptismal Regeneration.

Vid. Mede, p. 63. 106.
Jackson. T. 3. p. 298, 299 — 470 &c: &c

Infant Baptism

Vid. Hammond. — Jews baptised
their Proselites. vid. Hamm. Matt. 3. 1
Vid. Taylors great Exemplar.
— Liberty of Prophesying — 5 69 &c
See — Great Exemplar for baptizing fe-
male children among the Jews — part 1.
disc. of baptism — No 8. 9. 10.
Vid. Matt. 18. 1 — 6
— Hammond. Def. of Inf. Bapᵐ. 2. 100
Later end of V. 2. —
— Vol. 1. 607.

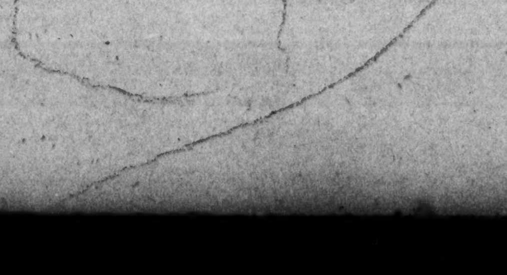
Confirmation

Hookers Ecc. pol. 234.

Pastoral Letter.

1. Anabaptists. 2 Socinianism.

3. The opinion that all religions are equal & that therefore, we may choose which we please. 4. Murraism — God having given man a reasonable nature will treat him accordingly — Cannot or will not make him holy by an arbitrary exertion of his power. If he could the necessity of all punishment would be at an end. 5 Chaunceism. God has threatned the punishments of the wicked under as strong terms as he could have done, were they eternal, i.e. never to cease — If not to cease but on our repentance; better to repent in this world — A state of punishment whose period exceeds our comprehension, to us infinite & eternal.



Righteousness.

Is the doing whatever God commands—

— of the law — obed. to ye Law — It shall be your righteousness — both righteous before God, walkd in all ye Ls. & Ods. of ye Lord blameless

— of faith — obed to every thing commanded in the Gospel, the Law of Faith

Sabbath

Mede — 5.5. & li: Webster

Thou shalt love the Ld thy G &c:
on these two commds hang all &c:—

1. To explain what is meant by loving God with all ye heart &c:

2. The commands enjoining ye love of G.

3. The reasonableness of ye duty—

4. In what sense ye first & great command

5. To explain what is meant by loving our neighbr as ourselves.

6. The commands enjoining ye duty.

7. The reasonableness of it.

8. In what sense ye 2d is like ye first comm.t 4

Part. II.

On these two commandments &c

1 In what sense ye law & prophets do hang on yse two comm.ts

1 They are founded—viz: ye commd of ye law, & the precepts of ye prophets—&c

2. They are fulfilled by this duty viz: ye 1st table by the love of G. & ye 2d by ~~loving~~ our neighbour

Gal. 2. 6. 7. — Page 1 { ~~Abraham believed God & it was accounted unto him &c:~~

page 3. { ~~While we look not at the things that are seen &c:~~

Rom. 14. 10 — p. 4 { ~~But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall &c:~~

Matt. 3. 15. — p. 7 } ~~Suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.~~

Gen. 4. 7 — p. 10 { ~~If thou doest well shall thou not be accepted? &c:~~

A Learned Apo — received his Gospel & commission from heaven — caught up into heaven, his thorn in the flesh — his behaviour at Areopagus — before the H. Priest — before Felix — ~~Not disobedient to the heavenly vision~~ — ~~consenting to S. Stephens death, partaker in other ministries, vid Felton~~

Philip. II. 5.

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.

You have, I trust, beloved Brethren, devoutly joined with the Church in the Collect for this day. In it we have acknowledged that one end of Gods sending his Son to take upon him our flesh, & to suffer death upon the cross was, that all mankind should follow the example of his great humility: And in it we have prayed that

God would mercifully grant, that we may both follow the example of his patience, & also be made partakers of his reſurrection.

The deſign of the Church is, therefore, to recommend to us the humility & patience of Christ as examples for our imitation; & to aſsure us, if we faithfully copy his heavenly pattern, we shall be rewarded by partaking in the bleſsedneſs & glory of his reſurrection.

To impreſs this duty ~~more~~ ſtrongly, ~~upon us,~~ & to bind it forceably upon ~~us~~ our minds, she hath made it the ſubject of our prayer to God, & then hath ſet before us a most affecting instance of the humility of Christ, in the Epistle, & of his patience in the Gospel for the day. God grant they may have their full effect on all of us! Of this surely they cannot fail, if ingenuity of temper, & propriety of conduct have not forsaken us.

How shall we fail to live in that imitation of Christs humility which we have acknowledged to God was the design of his coming & dying in our nature? How not follow the example of that patience which we have begged God to give us his grace that we may follow? Or how shall we hear in his holy Church the wonderful instance of his humility rede from the holy ſcripture of God, & know that it was recorded for our example & imitation, & not endeavour to obtain & follow the ſame mind which was in Christ Jeſus? How, again, ſhall we hear the history of his ſufferings for us, the patience with which he endured the unjust ſentence of his judges, the contradictions & revilings of ſinners, the ſharp agony of crucifixion, the ſenſe of the dereliction of God, & not from the heart love & admire it? or how love & admire it, & not wish to imitate it, in all our ſufferings in this world?

The ~~latter~~ former circumstance, the ſufferings of Christ are the proper ſubject of our contemplation the enſuing week: The text presents the latter, the example of Christs humility, directly to our view — *Let this mind be in you which was also in Xt Jesus*. God direct our hearts aright in the conſideration of it —

The mind which was in Christ Jesus means the temper & diſpoſition towards us with which he acted when he became our Redeemer. He was it ſeems in ye *form of God*; i.e. he was God; for he *tho't it no robbery* — it did not encroach on the right of another for him *to be equal with God* — Yet when the redemption of man became neceſsary, & to accomplish that, it became also neceſsary he should come into

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into the world; he did not affect to appear in that greatneſs & glory which were natural to him as God, but emptied himſelf of it all – laid it all aſide – *made himſelf of no reputation*; & not disdaining to become man, he even *took on him the form of a ſervant*, & being made in the likeneſs of men, became not only a lowly ſervant of God, but of men also; coming *not to be ministered unto, but to minister* to other.

And being found in faſhion as a man, in the form of a ſervant, *he humbled himſelf still farther*, *& became obedient to death, even the death of the croſs*, the most painful & ignominious death, in obedience to the will of his Father, & for the common benefit of mankind.

This is the account of that instance of Christs humility which the Church has this day set before us; And from it we learn,

1. That Christ Jesus being God humbled himself, & was made man:
2. That being made man, found in fashion as a man, he took on him the form of a servant:
3. That being in the form of a servant, he humbled himself still further & became obedient to death, even of the cross; that he might reconcile man God, & open for us the gate of everlasting life.

Let your minds, C. B. dwell for a little time on each of theſe circumstances; & may the holy Spirit of God be with you, & aſsist your contemplations.

That the bleſsed Saviour was God before he became our Mediator — even the eternal Son of God — appears from the expreſsion which declares him to have been in the *form of God*, before he was made man. His becoming really & truly man is expreſsed by his *being found in ~~the~~ fashion as a man*; his low & ſervile condition, is expreſsed by his taking on him *the form of a ſervant*. Therefore, being in the *form of God*, must expreſs his divine nature,

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previously to his aſsuming humanity. But God cannot begin to be. That wch is now God must have been God from eternity. From eternity, therefore, is the divinity of the holy Saviour. He now is, & ever was, & ever will be God bleſsed – And to him as God bleſsed forever, be ever aſcribed praise, & glory, & dominion.

Behold then the infinite humility & condeſcenſion of this adorable perſon! Behold the intenſeneſs of his love to miserable man! *God is love*; & love ſo exalted, so incomprehenſible, ſo infinite as Christ hath ſhewn could proceed from God only. From him only who created man could the redemption of man come.

But laying aside the glories of the God head & becoming man to redeem a lost world did not bound the humility of the divine Saviour — *He took on him the form of a servant.* ~~Behold~~ ! — The almighty creator, who made all things that were made, who upholds & governs all things that exist, who disposeth all the states & conditions of life, neglected the higher ranks of this world, the splendor of palaces, ye glory of kings, the majesty of emperors, by wch the vain hearts of men are oftentimes infatuated & filled with folly & envy,

&

& chose the humble station of a poor but honest family. Labour seems to have employed his life till he was near thirty years of age, fatigue & sorrow to have filled up the little remainder of it. Thereby teaching us of how small estimation the more exalted stations of earthly kingdoms are in his sight who fully knew the value of them all. Thereby also teaching us a lesson of humility as it stands contrasted with the lordly desires of ambition & worldly glory. — He came not to be ministered ~~to~~ unto, but to minister to others — not to regulate the kingdoms of this world, but to open the kingdom of heaven in it, & make it poſsible for wretched man to enter in & be ſaved.

Still further did the humility of Xt carry him. Though God, he became man: Though the prince of glory, he became the ſervant of all: Though the Lord of life, he became obedient to death, even the death of the croſs, for us miſerable ſinners. — A death the most painful, & appropriated to abject ſlaves & vile malefactors.

View the Redeemer in every ſtep of that proceſs he went through, & every step will be found marked with ſuch impreſsions of deep humility, as no other event can poſsibly produce.

The grand deſign of the abasement of the Son of God was the recovery of fallen man from ſin & misery, to life & happineſs immortal. It is reaſonable however to believe, that the particular arrangement of the proceſs of his incarnation, & life, & death, was intended to teach us yᵉ neceſsity of that humility which the Xx hath pointed out to us, & the way to obtain it, namely by following the example which Christ hath ſet us.

Pride probably is the moſt fatal corruption of our nature, & that which ſticks the cloſest to us. St. Paul cautioneth Timothy, that a Biſhop ought not to be a *novice*— one not thoroughly instructed & grounded in the faith & principles of our holy religion — *lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil*: Thereby letting us know that the devils transgreſsion was *pride*. By his instigation, the same fruitful ſource of all ſin was opened in Adam, who, lifted up in his imagination, aimed to be like God. From him the whole human nature hath been defiled by this monstrous temper, which hath conſtantly broken out in rebellion against God, in mischief & destruction to men.

Pride was not made for man: By the inspiration of ſatan it took hold of him. By the merciful interpoſition of God it must be rooted out or remain his bane forever. Gracious therefore is God, that he hath laid the foundation of mans redemption deep in humility — that he who is the propitiation for our ſins, hath ſet us an example of that humility, which tho' not neceſsary on his own account was much so on ours. Gracious also is God in cauſing the admonition of his holy Apostle to be written, which the piety of his Church hath this day placed before us for our contemplation, that we & all mankind may follow the example of Christ's great humility — *Let this mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus.*

Mind, it hath been obſerved, here ſignifies *temper* & *diſpoſition*. To have the ſame mind with Christ Jesus, is to have the ſame temper & deſpoſition which he manifeſted. Of his abaſement when he left the throne of his glory & became man, we are incapable. Our imitation of Christs humility cannot consist in doing the ſame things which he did, but in doing every thing which requires it with that temper which was in him, & which is in us from his Spirit.

Christs humility ſhewed itself in two respects — towards God, & towards man. His humility towards God conſiſted in his willing & perfect obedience — He became obedient to death, even the death of the croſs. He declared that he came in-

to the world to do the will of God, & that it was his *meat*, his highest pleaſure to fulfil it. With the most ſubmiſsive reverence he prayed in his agony, *O my Father, if it be poſsible, let this cup* — the bitter ſufferings he had offered himself to endure for ſin — *paſs from me*: *Nevertheleſs not my will but thine be done*. But the justice & holineſs of God required atonement for the ſin of the world. That atonement he had engaged to make; & he had offered his body & blood to God, under the emblems of bread & wine, to be that atonement, & he would not go back. He had ſaid, *Lo I come to do thy will O God*, & became obedient even to the death of the croſs.

Here C. B. is the pattern of our humility towards God. If we follow it, we ſhall, in all things obey God willingly, &, to the utmost of our ability, perfectly.

In holy baptism, we also have been dedicated & devoted to God, to be his faithful ſervants, in renouncing his enemies, believing his religion, & obeying his commands. We are, therefore, not only under the bond of duty, but of expreſs promise & ſtipulation to obey God & be his faithful ſervants. Imitate, therefore, the humility & faith of Christ; & to whatever tryals God providence shall call upon, be they ever so ſharp & diſtreſsing, ſay with your adorable Saviour, O my Father, if it be poſsible &c:

The other respect in which the humility of Christ ſhewed itſelf was towards men.

He ~~[illegible]~~

~~[illegible]~~ He deſcended from the throne of his glory & became man: He put on the form of a ſervant: He went about doing good, & ministering to the various neceſsities of human life, & at last poured out his life on the croſs, a ſacrifice for our ſins.

We have no throne of divine glory to leave, nor can we make our life an atonement for the ſins of others. But few of us are ſo humbly ſituated in life, but that we may sometimes be called to deſcend from our ſuperiority to do offices of kindneſs & humanity to thoſe who are much below us in the world. If we follow the example of Christs humility, we ſhall do this willingly, & cheerfully, & to the utmost of our ability. The diſtreſs of the miserable ought to recommend them to our relief; for this was the only circumſtance which recommended us to the mercy of Christ. He saw us miſerable, & tho' polluted in ourſelves, & at enmity with God, his love & pity excited him to ſhroud his divinity in mortal flesh, & in humility, & thro' pain & death, to come & help us.

Let this mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus, & think no body too low, or too mean, or too unworthy, whoſe miſery you can relieve. So shall the bleſsing of God be on you, & the glory with which God hath rewarded the humility of Christ shall, in its proper degree, be confered on ~~the~~ you also, when God shall judge the world at the last day.

Part II.

Having in the morning conſidered the example of Christs humility which the Church hath this day ſet before us, & recommended to our imitation, I come now to conſider his patience in the ſame view; that is, as a pattern for our imitation — a pattern which both reaſon & duty require us to copy after; which being perfect in itſelf, will lead thoſe who duly attend to it, to the highest poſsible perfection in this life, & to perfect happineſs & glory in the ~~world~~ life to come.

Patience will be the leſs difficult to practiſe when humility hath prepared the heart for its exercise. It is pride wch dispoſs the mind to peevishneſs & angry reſentments, which makes us uneaſy with our own circumstances, & envyous against thoſe who appear to be in a better ſtate. Nothing can effectually cure this discontent, but the ſame mind wch was in Christ Jesus. Let us then conſider in what manner the patience of the holy Jeſus manifested itself while he was here on earth: And let us beg grace of God to enable us to imitate according to our meaſure, the perfect pattern he hath ſet us, that following the example of his patience, we may live according to his will, &, by the mercy of God, be made like unto him in his eternal & glorious kingdom.

As the humility, ſo the patience of Christ ſhewed itself in two respects — with ~~respect~~ regard to God, & with ~~respect~~ regard to men. In both he is our pattern, & in both respects our duty requires that we exactly & constantly attend to him.

With respect to God the patience of Christ ſhewed itself in his perfect & willing reſignation & ſubmiſsion to God in every thing that concerned him. His circumstances in the world were low I mean in worldly estimation, yet he was content & murmured not. He had nothing of this world as his own property; neither houſe, nor lands, nor wealth of any kind; no where to rest & repoſe himſelf; nothing to appease the cravings of hunger, but what was ſupplied by the pious bounty of others, yet he was content & murmured not. He endured labour & travel & fatigue, to make known the will of God to men, & proclaim the approach & commencement of the kingdom of peace & good will from God to men — he was patient & repined not. He met with the most cruel treatment from his unrighteous judges: — innocent, they condemned him to the most bitter death: — that unrighteous ſentence — that bitter death he bore without repining at the will of God. The bitter ſorrow of his heart which, under the ſenſe of the dereliction of God, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!*

proceeded not from impatience to endure the will of God, but from pungent grief from the full feeling of the ſharp wrath of God most holy against ſin — from the ſenſe of what we must have endured, had he not borne the penalty for us.

Look now, C.B. at the patience of the bleſsed Saviour towards God, & ſee whether it will not plant the ſame mind in you that was in him? Whether it will not kill all repining at your circumſtances in this world, & teach you to be content with the allotments of divine providence to you? Whether it will not lead you to ſubmiſsion to God in all ſtates, & under all circumſtances? in poverty, in trouble, in pain, & ſickneſs, in death itſelf. All theſe things are the allotments of God, as much & as truly as the things which befel Christ; & they are allotted for wiſe & gracious purpoſes — to make us ſenſible of our own weak & dependent ſtate; & to lead us to him who is the author of our being, & who alone can help & releive us in our diſtreſses.

It is, I trust, no extravagance to ſuppoſe that every perſons external circumſtances are ſo ordered by divine wisdom & goodneſs (except poſsibly where we violently interpoſe by impatience, & wickedneſs) as to give that person the greatest poſsible chance for heavenly happineſs. With the same gracious deſign are all affairs relating to him conducted. Is he bleſsed with health & proſperity in the world? it is that the goodneſs of God may lead him to repentance, & bind his heart in love to his creator. Do loſses, & diſappointments, & pain, & ſickneſs, & poverty attend ~~them~~ him? it is that the goodneſs of God may correct something that is amiſs in ~~them~~ him; or to exerciſe, & ſtrengthen, & perfect ſome good & holy diſpoſition — to increase ~~their~~ his patience & ſubmiſsion to the will of ~~their~~ his Father in heaven — to ſet ~~them as examples~~ him as an example to others — that by ~~their~~ his good works, & pious tempers, bleſſedneſs may redound to ~~them~~ him, & glory to ~~their~~ his heavenly Father.

View the matter in this light, & ſay,

whether any perſon has a right to complain & be diſcontented with his worldly circumſtances? to be anxious to alter them, & diſpoſed to uſe unjuſtifiable methods to accompliſh his purpoſe? Rather, C. B. rejoice that God takes so much notice of you; that you are ſo much the objects of his care & love. And remember, when that mind is in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, you will be reſigned, & patient, & thankful unto God, in every condition, & in all circumſtances of life that can happen to you. Bend your whole mind, therefore, to obtain a diſpoſition wch was ſo eminent in Christ, the pattern of holineſs in Christians: And beg of God to produce, increase, & perfect it in you by his holy Spirit. It is the ſure road to content & quiet in this world — to bleſsedneſs & glory in the next.

Having now ſeen how the patience of Xt manifested itself towards God, let us next ſee how it ſhewed itself towards men.

He came into the world to do the will of God. Among other things, it was the will of God that he ſhould proclaim the Gospel of peace, even of the peace & good will of God to man. In his ministry he was daily encountered with the contradiction of ſinners, to the oppoſition of the great & learned among the Jews — all this he bore with meekneſs

neſs & patience unparalelled. He was reproached as the friend & companion of ſinners, reviled as a glutton & a drunkard, accuſed of a combination with ſatan to anſwer the most wicked purpoſe of introducing idolatry:— meekly & fully he refuted theſe calumnies, but no hasty word escaped from his lips, no vindictive action ſullied his character. Except where the honour of God was inſulted by hypocriſy, or open hardened villany, not even a harsh reprimand proceeded from his mouth. With meekneſs & patience did he also bear what by all men has ever been eſteemed moſt irritating to the human mind the treachery of one desciple, the denial of another, the cowardise of all.— no anger, no cenſure, no coldneſs ſucceeded. When his desciples, irritated, on his account, at the baseneſs of the Samaritans who refused him a lodging for one night, wiſhed to have called fire from heaven, to have destroyed the inhospitable village, quickly did he check their ill-tempered zeal, *Ye know not what manner of ſpirit ye are of. The Son of man is not come to destroy mens lives, but to ſave them* (Lu. IX. 55, 56) Let us conclude this account with his his meekneſs & patience at the time of his trial & crucifixion. The clamours of the multitude, the malicious accuſations of the priests, the rude insults of the ſoldiers. The ſpittings & blows on his immaculate face & head, the painful crown of thorns, & robe & ſcepter of mock royalty with which insolence clothed him — excited no angry reſentment in him — dumb like a lamb under the hand of the ſhearer, he opened not his mouth to revile or reproach. Fainting under the weight of his croſs he complained not of the barbarity of thoſe who compelled him to carry it. And when lifted up on it, the revilings & taunts of the chief priests, *He saved others, himſelf* he cannot ſave — If he be the Christ, the Son of God, let him come down from the croſs, & we will believe him — He trusted in God, let him deliver him now, if he will have him, drew nothing from him, but, Father forgive them: They know not what they do.

Let this mind, this patient temper, which was in Christ Jesus, be also in you, 6. B. You will then be able to bear, the ill treatment of unthinking men, with leſs angry reſentment, than the common practice of the world exhibits. The wrath of the angry, the fury of the paſsionate, the ſcoffs of the malicious, the inſults of the proud, the injuries of the revengeful, will be like ye falling flakes of ſnow on the face of the earth—

earth; for a time they may bury; they cannot wound you. The favour of God, like the warmth of the ſun, will melt them away, & restore your reputation more fresh & verdant.

Some philoſophers have had a notion or of the poſſibility of making a ſtone by chymical proceſs, of the existance of a ſtone, which would turn every thing it touched to Gold. Patience is that philoſophers ſtone. Every thing that happens is convert-ed into real wealth to the ſoul, ~~and~~ adds to the riches of eternity, when it is received with patience & ſubmiſsion to the will of God. In patience poſſeſs ye your ſouls, ſaid the perfect pattern of patience to his diſciples, when he had foretold the impending horrible deſtruction of Jeruſalem, & the perſecutions & diſtreſſes which ſhould then happen to them Intimating that it was the best guard they could have, & would ward off all the aſſaults of their enemies, ſo that peace & quietneſs of mind ſhould not be hurt by all the fiery darts of the wicked.

I would to God, the perſon who is impatient & fretful when every thing ſucceeds not to his wish, who is iritable & vexed at all real or ſuppoſed abuſe, would reflect on the diſreſpect & injury he thereby does himſelf, & on the offence he commits against God in arraigning the diſpensations of divine providence, & preſumptuously ſuppoſing he could have conducted them better himſelf; & then look to the example the holy Jesus hath ſet him, of meekneſs & patience, under the higheſt poſsible provocation, & groſseſt abuse that could be committed, & ſee whether it would not shame him into a more mild & christian conduct.

There is also this circumstance to be conſidered, that when we ſuffer, if it be not on account of our personal evil deeds, it is in consequence of that evil which ſin hath introduced among men; And that as we are ſinners in common with others, we must share the effects of ſin in common with them. That was not the case with Christ. Exactly did the penitent thief [illegible] deſcribe the innocence of his character, when he remarked to his reviling partner in ſufferings, *Doſt thou not fear God, ſeeing thou art in the ſame condemnation? And we indeed juſtly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: But this man hath done nothing amiſs.*

It is the remark of St. Peter, that it is no glory for a man to take patiently the chastisement of faults which he hath committed, *but*, saith he, *if when ye do well & ſuffer for it, ye take it patiently; this is acceptable with God* (1 Pet. II. 20)

The abuſes, & provocations, & injuries of others towards us, inſtead of exciting our anger, & destroying our patience, ought to be received with meekneſs & borne with a quiet ſpirit; for then only is patience acceptable to God, when it proceeds from the ſame temper in us which was in Christ Jeſus — which bears everything for Gods ſake, & thro' love to men:— which returneth good for evil, bleſſing for curſing, & prayers for deſpiteful uſage.

My brethren, ſaid St. James, *count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations,* or trials of your faith; *knowing, that the trial of your faith worketh patience:*

But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect & entire wanting nothing. Perfect patience, therefore, is the perfection of the chriſtian character; & patience is perfected by exerciſe. But patience cannot be exerciſed but on thoſe occaſions, which call it into action, by something which comes on us from God, as all afflictions in general do; or is, by Gods permiſsion brought on us by the ill conduct of men towards us.

I beſeech you, therefore, C. B. not to thrust from you thoſe opportunities of exerciſing your patience, to which Gods providence shall call you; nor abuſe them by peeviſhneſs, & anger. Afflictions of various kinds will come upon you, & injuries & abuſes from ignorant & wicked men; & you must bear them. Whether you will bear them with anger, or with patience, depends on yourſelf. The latter God calls you to do out of obedience to him, out of regard to your own ease, & the peace of your neighbourhood, & to promote your ſpiritual interest. what God calls you to do, he will aid & assist you in doing. And tho he gets nothing by your patience, he hath graciously promised to reward you for it in his own heavenly kingdom. By the mouth of an Apoſtle he hath told you, if you patiently ſuffer with Christ, you shall be glorified & reign with him.

Let this mind be, this humble, patient temper be in you which was also in Christ Jesus. Then will God exalt you from humility & patience to partake of ye glory & blessedness which now clothe the humanity of his beloved Son at his own right hand in heaven.

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Glory be to thee O LORD — 13pr S—y

Coloss I 9 — 12

For this cause we also, since the day we heard of it, do not cease to pray for you, & to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom & spiritual understanding. That ye might walk worthy of the LORD — unto all pleasing being fruitful in every good work & increasing in the knowledge of GOD —

St Paul when he wrote his epistle to the Colossians seems never to have been among them. They had been converted to Xty by Epap

—this was a highly esteemed friend & fellow servant with the apostle, & a faithful minister of Xt to the Coloss. According to the ancient histories of the church Epaphras not only converted the Colossians from the errors of heathenish idolatry to the Xan faith, but continued with them as their Bp to perfect the work he had begun, by making them sound & perfect members of that holy Xt into which he had by G's grace brought them, that they might be made partakers of the inheritance of the Sts in light—

From Epaphras the Ap. had learnt the conversion of the Colossians to Xty—from him he had also learnt their love toward the Apo—IE, their affectionate regard for him, wrought in them by that Sp., whose fruit is love to the brethren especially to the worthy Ministers of Xt —

On account of their conversion from Idolatry to the faith & worship of the true G— & Saviour of Man, & of that ardent love they bore to him, as the Ap. of Xt & an eminent & successful preacher of his religion — this holy Man never ceased to pray for them & to desire earnestly of G— that they might be filled with the knowledge of his will — that they might be endued with all wisdom & spiritual understanding, that so knowing the will of G— they might live worthy of G him by pleasing him in all things, by abounding in all good works & increasing still more & more in the knowledge of G— . Behold then in the text the duty of all Xtn Ministers, to pray in imitation of this holy Ap. for all Xan people, especially for those to whom they are more nearly related, that they may be filled with a knowledge of his will, that so they may know on all occasions what G— requires of them, that they may be endued with the gift of wisdom & spiritual understanding — that they may also walk worthy of the L. by obeying his will in all things ever doing those things that are pleasing unto him — abounding in every good work, according as the holy nature of their holy religion & which G— had also pointed out to them; that so they may ever increase in the knowledg [illegible] of G—s will & in the habit of doing it — 4. G–

This is undoubtedly the duty of all those who by the merciful providence of G– are called to minister to his people in holy things & to build them up in the knowledge & practice of their duty, that they may be meet companions of the Saints in glory

This duty we hope & trust they faithfully discharge — & gracious is G– who hath promised to hear & regard their prayers & to pour his blessing on them & on his people.

But if it be the duty of Ministers to pray for their people; it must also be the duty of the people to pray for themselves — that G– would hear the prayers of their Minister — that he would enlighten their minds with divine knowledge & wisdom, & that they of G— may discern his will concerning them, & may be enabled to live worthy of him, by doing those things which are pleasing to him, abounding in all the good works of righteousness & holiness & mercy, & increasing in the knowledge of G— daily.

If it be the duty of people to live thus in the habit of prayer to G— for those holy tempers, it must be also their duty to live as they pray — to strive to attain & cultivate those good & holy tempers for which they pray. We feel & confess that we are weak & frail by nature, unable of ourselves to do those things which G— commands & to live in those habits of virtue which he requires — or to obtain those tempers & dispositions of goodness & holiness & purity which the laws of the gospel demand of us. Therefore are we directed to pray to G— constantly & fervently, that he would impart to us the gifts & graces;— the constant presence & influence of his most holy Sp— to do that for us & in us which we are not able to do for ourselves. But this disposition & habit of prayer suppose something more.

They suppose that we do on every occasion, exercise & live in the habits of those good dispositions & tempers which we pray for. Otherwise why should we pray for them? — Why beg of G— those tempers & dispositions & graces, which we never exercise, never b bring into practice &c. For instance, if we pray to G— that we may be filled with a knowledge of his will,— does not this prayer suppose & imply that we use every proper method, & employ our diligence to be instructed in his will; & to obtain the knowledge of those things which he has revealed to us & made known to be our duty? So if according to our bounden duty we pray for that wisdom which is above, wh. descendeth upon us from the Father of lights which maketh us wise unto salvation; – this very prayer supposes our utmost exertions to live according to this wisdom, in the constant habit of all its fruits. –

Once more – if we pray as we daily ought to do, that we may be enabled to walk worthy of the Ld, by doing those things that are pleasing to him, being fruitful in all good works & increasing in the knowledge of G—. This very prayer supposes & implies that we endeavour in all things to obey G— to comply with the practice of all the good works which our holy religion points out to us; & to study diligently the will of G— that we may be ready to fulfill it —

In no other respect can our prayers avail any thing. If they serve not this purpose they serve none that is good. To suppose that our prayers can have such an effect on G— as to make him change his purposes, or induce him to bestow on us those gifts & graces of his Sp., of which we make no use, — to impart to us that divine knowledge which we disregard, or that heavenly wisdom whose fruit we will not bring forth, is idle nonsense & ought never to enter the head of a reasonable man. Our prayers can do us no good, but only as they stir up & increase & enliven, those holy tempers & devout affections, & divine dispositions of heart which we pray for; & which when they are once rooted & grounded in the heart, will shew themselves in our outward behaviour & practice.

Then too are they agreeable to G— when they so influence the heart as to regulate the tongue & the hands. For as out of the evil heart of man, proceed evil thoughts & words & actions; so out of the heart of man, renewed by the gifts & graces of G. &c, & formed by the daily exercise of prayer & devotion to the habits of holiness, proceed thoughts & words & actions that are good & acceptable to G— *a good man* saith J. C. *Out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth good things; & an evil man &c* — (Matt XII-35) For when the tree is good, the fruit will also be good — but if the tree be corrupt, so will be also the fruit.—

They therefore who are evil, who have an evil heart, cannot speak or do good things, for out of the fulness of the heart, — according to its state & disposition, the lips speak & the hand act. The same observations which I have made on prayer for the gifts & graces of the H Sp— ought to be attended to all our prayers for the good things of this world or of the next — If our prayers influence not our own hearts & make them better, they do nothing for us —

G— who is not only Almighty & all-wise but also infinite in goodness & justice must be supposed to govern the world & all the affairs in it, by the rules of his own wisdom & justice & goodness. It is not to be imagined that his plan can be broken in upon or changed by the prayers & supplications of mortal men— who have neither goodness or justice or wisdom that they can call their own. But when the prayers of men, by exercising those tempers & dispositions which G— approves & requires, form their hearts & spirits into them, & by G—s grace bring them into the state which he hath commanded— the state of resignation to him, it then becomes proper for G— to do to them & for them what in their former state, neither his wisdom nor justice nor goodness would permit him to grant

All the alteration therefore that our ~~pra~~ prayers are to make is in ourselves— in our own hearts & tempers— In G— they can make none. But the exercise of the proper tempers & devout affections of prayer, tend directly to produce & increase in us, those dispositions & habits of holiness which G- hath promised to accept & bless. ~~& then~~ And then it becomes proper for him, to give us those blessings which before were improper for us - & which probably we were incapable of receiving, at least so as to improve them to our good & his glory —

Of this we may be certain, that G- will bestow on us the good things of this world, & the blessings of his spirit, in that way & degree that he sees best for us & most conducive to our eternal happiness — He hath made it our duty to pray to him for every thing that w we want, because prayer to him exercises & strengthens our faith in him, dependance on him & resignation & obedience to him, w.ch make us capable of receiving & being benefited by bleſsings from him —

If we exercise these tempers of heart towards him, we may be sure of every thing from him that is proper for us; & if we do not, nothing we can receive from him will do us any essential good. These tempers are best exercised by prayer & devotion; & therefore are prayer & a devout heart, i.e a heart devoted to his service always neceſsary for us, & do always draw down on us the favour & bleſsing of G—

The only improvement I shall now make of what has been said on this subject, is to refer it to your own consciences, whether the ex. of prayer & devotion towards G— which is fruitful of so many advantages, be not evidently your duty? & whether therefore you ought not to live constantly in the practice of it. Faith in G— as your creator & redeemer, dependance on his goodness & resignation to his will, not only evidently become the character of a reasonable & prudent man, but they are the groundwork of our happiness here & hereafter. Prayer is the proper means, of begetting & increasing, & perfecting these dispositions in you. If then you wish to have these dispositions, you must use the means proper to acquire them. That these dispositions are necessary for you, appears from this, that they are necessary to your future happiness with G— To be resigned to G— & desirous that his will may be accomplished in all things, to live & act in conformity, to that will is the highest wisdom of Men & Angels, — & no creature can be happy any further, or in any other way than is agreeable to that will. The reason is that G— being perfect, his will must be perfectly that which is good, in all things & on all occasions —

Therefore O gracious Ld, grant to us, that we obeying in all things, may abide in thy protection & love unto our lives end, & finally may be made partakers of thy H. King:m through J Xt our Ld —

From these words, I, in the morning took notice of the duty of the ministers of Xt, to imitate the example of the holy Ap., & pray earnestly to G— for all their people, especially for those more immediately under their care — that they may be filled with the knowledge of G's will — that they may abound in all wisdom & spiritual understanding — that they may walk worthy of the Ld, pleasing him in all things abounding in every good work, & increasing daily more & more in the knowledge of G— I next took notice of the duty of the people implied in the text viz to pray for themselves — that all these things may be accomplished in them. — And lastly of their duty to live as they pray, & to endeavour in their practice to acquire all those tempers & habits that they pray to G— for.

The first part of the Ap. pray for the people of Coloss, is that they might be filled with the knowledge of G's will. Now if it was his duty thus ~~to~~ to pray for them: Or if thus to pray for them, was a proper instance of Xan charity to them & an instance of love & obedience to his master J Xt — then it was his duty to instruct ~~in~~ them to the utmost of his power in the will of G— with the knowledge of which he prayed that they might be filled [redacted]

This duty he fulfilled by the ~~duty~~ Epistle which he wrote to them — confirming them in that faith, which they had learned of Epaphras their Bp — cautioning them against the pernicious errors of the Jews & corrupt Xans, respecting holy days & the worship of Angels; declaring to them & establishing the Divinity of JESUS the redeemer, & directing their conduct as Xans, by certain rules of holy living. Thereby guarding both their faith & practice in the way of G's commandments – & setting us an example, of the duty of endeavouring to accomplish by the exertion of our best abilities, those things which we beg of G- in prayer — What he did for the Colossians in this epistle, he did also for other Xx in the epistles he wrote to them. In this he hath not only set an example to all the ministers of Xt, but hath furnished them with materials, from which they may draw the most useful lessons of instruction for the people whom G's providence hath committed to their care to be instructed in his will. But not only the writings of St Paul, but also of the other authors of the books of the New Testament, & the whole Bible particularly the gospels, containing the history & discourses of the L. J— are the proper store-house from which a minister, ought to draw all the instruction which he delivers as necessary to salvation. The books of the bible contain the revelation of G— to Man, to inform him ~~that~~ what he is to believe & do in this world, that he may be happy with G in the world to come. They therefore make known to us, the will of G— concerning us— & being given as the same Ap. testifies, by inspiration of G— are profitable, for doctrine —for reproof— for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man, (the minister) of G- may be perfect, ~~and~~ both with regard to his own practice, & to his instruction of others - thoroughly furnished both to do & teach every good work (2 Tim III.16) From this fountain as I said he ought to draw all his instruction to others, both of faith & practice, & to regulate his own conduct in life by rules drawn from them

But if it be the duty of the minister to instruct the people under his care diligently out of G's word, it is the duty of the people to hear & regard his instructions. It is therefore their duty to come where his instructions are delivered, that he may do his duty to them -

The order of our ++ & the custom of the country in which we live, is that we assemble twice on every Sabbath to worship & praise the G- of our salvation - And that forenoon & afternoon after prayers a sermon or discourse of instruction be delivered to the people. This seems a wise regulatition as far as the minister is concerned: It ties his duty so fast upon him, that he cannot easily neglect it

But let us remember withal, that as much as it is the Ministers duty to prepare sermons of instruction for his his people, just so much it is their duty to come & hear him deliver them. — And further — if it is his duty to do this at all times & seasons of the year — even so again is it his people's duty to attend upon him whenever he is ready, ~~&~~ not to suffer the summers heat or winters cold to keep them away — —

But to proceed, I must here take notice of the ample provision which the Xp hath made for the instruction of her members out of the word of G— in the psalms, lessons, epistles & gospels which are constantly read in the course of her service. Here instruction is dealt out not as in the sermon, in the words & conceptions of a fallible man, but in the simplicity & elegance of the word of G— the fountain of all truth — Besides — the bible is translated into our own language & is in hands of every one of you. We have therefore an opportunity of reading & studying it by ourselves —

These advantages besides other books of instruction which are in all hands, have made religious knowledge, at least so much of it as is necessary to a holy life, easy to be obtained by all people, unless it be very much their own fault — This

knowledge of the will of G— the apostle saith is
to be held in all wisdom & spiritual understand
-ing. Barely to know the words of G's will, un
-less we prudently apply them to our own case
& direction in holiness & attend to the spiritu-
-al meaning, as well as to that which is li-
-teral, will answer but little purpose unless
it be to enable people to talk & dispute about
religion. But religion is to serve other & gre-
-ater purposes than these. It is to regulate
the heart & affections towards G— & man, & to
direct & inform us in all the scenes of life
so as to regulate our conduct in all things

Even the will of G— however we may
be filled with the knowledge of it— if that
knowledge do not teach us how to apply
it with wisdom & spiritual understanding

to our own cases & the duties of our station, will be apt to degenerate into enthusiasm or superstition, instead of building us up in the holiness & piety of Xians.

Accordingly the ap. considers the knowledge of the will of G— as relating to practice — the conduct of Xian life, & prays that the Colossian Xians being filled with that knowledge might walk worthy of the L. unto all well pleasing. That is knowing the will of G— they might be able to fulfill it, to his pleasure & acceptance, being fruitful in every good work & increasing in the knowledge of G— To the duties of their holy profession as founded on the knowledge of G— their Ministers exhortations must be applied. And these duties must be urged

& inculcated on them by motives & arguments drawn from the book of G's word —from the common principles of Xty, from the orders & offices of the Xt & from the situation of Xans in this life; full of temptations & subject to infirmities, & accidents & vanities of many kinds ——

When you consider that the end & design of your holy religion is to make you better, & by regulating & correcting the unruly passions & lusts & evil tempers of your nature, & by conducting you in holiness & purity, to fit & prepare you for the heavenly kingdom of G— you must be sensible that it is intended to serve & defend you in your most essential in terests, & on this account it deserves your most serious regard, when you consider the vanity & uncertainty of this life, the numberless evils with which it abounds; the scanty supplies of pleasure or happiness which it affords, its uncertain continuance & the certainty of its ending in a few years. When to this you add the reflection, that the life which is to succeed is eternal & changeth & endeth not — that your state in it will be happy or miserable, according as in your life you obey or disobey G— & to the importance of religion this further circumstance will be added, that it ought to be immediately regarded & no time is to be lost in attending to it —

Religion therefore being a practical business, you ought immediately to regulate your practice, i.e. to direct your lives by its precepts. If you put this off till you are old, you ought to recollect, you may not live to be old: Most of those who are born into the world, die young or in the prime of life, & few arrive at 70 years — And among those who live to be old, they seldom regard religion more when they grow old than they did when they were young, but if they have neglected it in their youth, continue to neglect it in their old age, & at last die as they have lived without it —

The Ap. prays that we may be filled with the knowledge of G's will — For what end? that our knowledge may be ever floating in our heads & imaginations? & enable us to talk & dispute? Can this make us any better? Will it correct our will dispositions, or build us up in holiness, & fit us for the kingdom of Xt in heaven? If it do not descend into the heart it will be of little avail, that the head was well stocked with religious knowledge. The corrupt passions & tempers of our nature will never be corrected by mere knowledge, nor the habits of holiness planted & perfected by it —

When the heart is rightly disposed by faith & trust in G— by dependance on him & resignation to him — when that desires that the will of G— may be accomplished in all things, then our knowledge of the will of G— may direct us to distinguish what is the will of G— & so far will be of great use to us. But it must be the obedient disposition of the heart which will alone dispose us to do it —

When we are truely disposed to walk worthy of the Ld, unto all pleasing, i.e. to do all those things which he hath commanded, which he hath promised to accept, & with which he declareth himself & to be well pleased, then our knowledge of G's will, drawn from divine revelation — & the instruction of his ministers &c become necessary for us, as they point out our conduct to us, & inform us what in our circumstances is that will of G— which we are to follow — It would far exceed the compass of a sermon to ennumerate & enforce all the particulars of Xian duty which the will of G— hath made necessary for us.

If ye know these things said Xt. to his disciples, in which I have now instructed you — happy are you if ye do them — Blessed were they above others, who received instruction from the divine lips of the H. J. — & yet he pronounced not his disciples happy because they were filled with a knowledge of G's will — but only on condition that they did those things which he taught them —

Attend therefore B. B. to these things & rest not in your knowledge of G's will, nor pride yourselves in the knowledge of your duty, nor of the H. Scrips. — But reduce all your knowledge to practice — Let it govern your hearts, as well as inform your heads. Let it correct your passions as well as instruct your understanding – let bring every desire of your hearts into obedience to him that you may grow up in all things in him as good branches that abide in the vine – & draw nourishment from it. Lest hearing & knowing the sayings of Xt, the word of G– & doing them not, you become like the foolish man who built his house on the sands, & when the rains fell & the winds blew, when the storms of this world assaulted it – it fell & great was the fall of it –

Grant O Ld, that we knowing thy will, may by thy grace, obey thee in all things, & finally be made partakers of thy heavenly treasure, through J Xt our Ld —

M L - - 1805 Bpt-y

- - ~~M~~ L - O△ 1806

1810 Coloſs. III 17 - M L - 5 Lent 1809

And whatsoever you do in wor
or deed, do all in the name of the
LORD JESUS - giving thanks
to God the Father by him -

A careful reading of S.t Pau
epistle to the Colossians will leave us n
room to doubt that the principal design
he had in writing it, was to recover those
converts to Xty from the false notions wh.
the Jewish Xans had introduced among
them. One of these corrupt notions was
the obligation of the law of Moses upon the
disciples of Xt - That they were equally

the Jews obliged to observe the New Moon feasts & Jewish sabbaths & other holy days & to abstain from those meats which the law forbids. This notion is particularly confuted chap. II where the Ap. shews that by baptism into the faith of Xt. which he calls the circumcision of Xt, they were free from all subjection to the law: Xt having by his death of which baptism is the figure, abolished the hand writing of the Jewish ordinances & taken it away - I.E. He had fulfilled them all & they being ordained only for a time to lead Men to Xt, having answerd their purpose were cancelled & their obligation was at an end.

Another false notion which the Jewish converts had introduced among the Coloss. was the worship of Angels under the pretence or shew of humility; because as they taught, A G- was too high & holy to be approached in prayer by such low & impure beings as Men: that therefore he had appointed his Angels to receive their prayers & present them to him: & that on account of this appointment & of the many good offices they did us with G— as well as on account of their nature so much exalted above ours, they became the proper objects of worship, not indeed as the supreme G—, but as beings who held a middle state between G & M, & by whose ministry G— governed the world & communicated his blessings to the inferior creatures.

(The Jews generally believed that the captain of the Lds hosts who appeared [illegible] to Joshua (Jos V-15) was the Angel Michael who said to Joshua: Put of thy shoes from of thy feet [illegible] Him they esteemed as particularly appointed by G- to superintend their nation & conduct their armies. To him they had particular regard worshipping him, not indeed as G, nor as a mediator of redemption, but as intercessor who presented their prayers to G— & procured blessings for them. This pobably was the origine of Angel worship among the Jews & transferred by them among the Xans & in the Romish Church it still keeps it's hold to this day, notwithstanding all that St Paul hath said against it— *Let no man beguile you of your reward* – cheat you of that felicity which your Xan profession intitles you to hope for— *in a voluntary humility & worshipping of Angels intruding into those things he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly* mind.)

To this unwarranted practice of Angel worship, the text has a direct reference. As the Jewish converts by pretending that G— had directed his Angels to receive our prayers, because he was too exalted & holy for us to approach; did intrude thereby into things which they had not seen— nor had G. revealed & they were prompted to this by their vanity that they might appear to be better acquainted with the mind of G— than others— the Ap. exhorts the Colossians not to be cheated with this affectation of Humility, & shew of wisdom in will worship, because G— ha no where commanded it. (C. 11, 18-23) But as they had a Mediator appointed of G— wm

Xt whom he had raised from the dead &
with whom they had been buried by bap-
tism. & through whom they had risen to
newness of life, it was their duty to set their
affections on spir & eter things above ~~[illegible]~~ where Xt
sitteth on the right hand of G— Then hav-
ing given them some instructions in the
duties of Xty & especially of that holy life &
conversation which the Gospel required, he
adverts to their conduct as Xan worshippers
& admonishes them to stir devotion in them-
-selves & in others, by Psalms & hymns & spi-
ritual songs & whatever ye do (that is in your
religious assemblies) whether in word or deed
do all in the name of the Ld J— giving tha-
nks to G— & the F—

The Mediator & intercessor therefore thro' whom Xans are to approach A G— is J. the Ld, the blessed son of the A F, the Redeemer of Men. The reason why prayer & praise are ultimately refered to the A F, is because he is the origine & fountain of Divinity. They are to be offered through the son, that by his intercession & by his presenting them to the F, they may find acceptance with him; & that from ~~the~~ F, we may receive the things we ask, that so the F may be glorified in the son. (Rev VIII, 3, 4; Joh XV, 16 & XIV, 13, 14) Though therefore prayer is made to ~~to~~ Xt & praise ascribed to him by the Aps. in their writings & by the Xp in her worship because of his divine nature, being G of G— the eternal

Son of the A F— in whom dwelleth the fulness of the G—d & because he is our Ld G— having bought us with a price & redeemed us from death, & is therefore the proper object of adoration & worship yet the direction of the Ap. in the text to do every thing in our worship in the name of the Ld J. giving thanks to G— the F through him, is not confined to this one passage, but is common in the Ss.

You will find the same direction & almost in the same words in Ep. V. 19.20, [illegible]ith Speaking to yourselves i e among yourselves, referring to the universal practice of the Xns of celebrating the praises of G— by alternate responses— Speaking to yourselves, answering one another in psalms & hymns & Sp.l songs singing &c Giving thanks always for all things unto G & the F in the name of our Ld J Xt

In Hebrews XIII, 15 he

saith By him (J Xt) let us offer the sacrifice of praise to G, continually

As it is therefore a clear point that the eternal son of G- is the mediator between G- & M- & the intercessor by virtue of his everlasting priesthood by whom our prayers & praises are to be presented to the F, & through whom they are acceptable to ~~h~~ him, there is not only no need of other intercessors either Angels or Saints, but it is an indignity ~~d~~ done to the Son of G- to apply to them for that purpose; an invasion of his right, an encroachment on his office, & therefore idolatry to be abhorred of all Xan people, because it ascribes the honour & office of the son of G- who is himself G- blessed forevermore to the creatures of his hand, to the servants of his will. The practice is therefore not only ~~to be~~ ~~abhorred~~ unwarranted but

-wicked & that in a high degree. And not only wicked but absurd, as will appear from this one consideration, that we know not that they can hear our prayers should we pray to them—nor can they know the hearts & desires of him that prays, for to know the heart is the prerogative of G-only—

Though therefore Angels are high & powerful beings exalted above us in nature & dignity, they are no objects of our worship. On account of their nature & station among G's creatures & on account of their being ministering spirits by appointment of their creator to those who shall be heirs of salvation, they deserve our regard & veneration—our worship belongs to G-only. [redacted]

Having gone through what I deem to sufficient on this subject I shall now call your attention to consider more particularly the Ap. injunction Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Ld J—

This may be considered in two points of view, as it relates to the conduct of the publick worship in the Xh of Xt, or as it relates to the Xan life— In the first view it has been already partially noticed. For that the text has a particular reference to the publick worship of the Xh, appears clearly from the previous verse of this chapter— Teaching & admonishing one another in psalms & hymns & spiritual songs; singing with grace in your hearts to the Ld— In this view it has been already shewn, that it was the design of the Ap. to convince the Colossian Xans, that neither

Angels nor Saints could be their intercessors with G: It will be unnecessary to say any more on this subject at present, but before I close this discourse I will ~~[illegible]~~ notice to you the care the Xp has taken, to order her publick service in perfect conformity to the direction of the Ap. The proportion of psalms & hymns & spiritual songs which diversify her worship, not only keep attention awake, & devotion alive, but stir it up & increase it, by the alternate responses between the Minister & Congregation, together with the chaunting of the Hymns, which I persuade myself you do with grace in your hearts to the Ld, fulfilling the Ap. direction ~~Speaking~~ Teaching & admonishing one another in psalms & hymns &

spiritual songs, singing &c

It is therefore much to be hoped B.B. that you will shew a grateful sense of the blessings the Ch hath provided for you, by doing your duty & devoutly bearing your part in her service which you see is constructed on the plan which the Ap. has directed. Remember therefore when you come to church, which you ought to do whenever you possibly can, remember I say, that you do not come to be an idle spectator of what others are a doing - you do not come to hear another pray to G & praise him, but you come to pray to him & to praise him yourself - You will therefore take care that your heart be duly employed; & that whenever the service requires that you join the audible devotion of the lips, to that of the heart - & whatever you do, in word or deed, whether ~~in~~ with the heart in silent devotion, or with the lips in the responses, reciting the psalms singing or chaunting the praises of G— or on the knees in bodily adoration, do all in the name & through the Ld J— giving thanks & praise to G— the F through him

And here before I conclude I beg your patience while I repeat to you ~~again~~ what I have just observed - that your business in church is not to be an idle spectator of what is going forward - you are not simply to hear your minister pray - you are not to see him kneel, but you are to pray & to kneel yourselves - in short it is not his devotion, but your own, that will do you good - { It has been objected to the service of the Church that it is nothing but form & ceremony - & I grant that this must be true in some measure - to those who bring with them to Church, neither a spirit of devotion - nor a sense of religion, it is no wonder if all is formal - But when the truely penitent & contrite heart, oppressed & overwhelmed with the burden of it's sins - dismayed & confound with the fear of G's wrath - with such a mind, how delightful is to join in the confession, & to hear from it's duly authorized Minister the declaration of the absolution & remission of his sins - to the pious & grateful mind how acceptable is it to shout forth the praises of G- & boldly itself to approach the throne of grace - to the meek & lowly in heart, to kneel & bow down & humble both mind & body before the aweful presence of the Ld G-s

Hosts is in the highest degree well pleasing in
ſight — Only B.B. bring these affections with
you to church & with pious David will you join

How amiable are thy Tabernacles O Ld of Host

One day in thy courts is better than a thousand

May G— grant to us that we may be always
of this mind through J Ct —

Having in the morning explained
the text, & considered the particular aim St
Paul had in writing in this manner to the
Colossian Xans, viz to bring them off from
the idolatrous practice of addressing divine
worship to Angels as intercessors with G- for
them; & to establish them in the Xan doctrine
& faith, that JESUS is the only mediator betw-
een G- & M, & the only intercessor through whom
our prayers & praises & all the worship of the Xt
& devotions of private Xans can be offered to the
Alt. F-.

From the text in general I then observed
might be drawn two considerations of consi-
derable importance, viz the directions might

be considered as it relates to the conduct of publick worship in the Xp of Xt, & secondly as it relates to the conduct of the Xan life -

The first of these two subjects was likewise taken into consideration [illegible] in the morning We will now therefore attend to the text as it may refer to the conduct of the Xan life -

Whatsoever you do in word or deed &c

1 And in the first place this implies, that in all we do, we have a respect to the will of Xt, & knowing that our Xan profession obliges us to live to him who died for us - ~~the~~ to consult the honour of his name & doctrine - that we bring no reproach upon either, but by our Xan behaviour induce others to give glory to his name by becoming his serious & conscientious disciples. This very inference St

Paul draws from this consideration (2 Cor. v 15) *That they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves but unto him who died for them & rose again.* Nothing can be more reasonable than ~~that~~ they who are redeemed from death by the blood of Xt & have receivd directions from him how they ought to live & to please G—; & have the communications of the H Sp. to enable them to do so, should walk in that newness of life which is enjoined upon them by their redeemer & according the motions & inspirations of that H Sp. they receive from him. Those actions or deeds cannot however be done in his name which dishonour his religion as all wicked words & deeds ~~no~~ must do— nor can we be said to live to him who died for us or to do all in word or deed in the name of the Ld J. if we live in opposition to his will, in disobedience to his commands; & by our wicked lives bring dishonour upon his holy religion & expose his name to be ridiculed & blasphemed by loose & libertine men through our fault. To an earnest desire therefore to please him we must add the steady efforts of our best endeavours to live as he has directed, that so all our words & deeds being according to his Will may through him be acceptable to the Al:ty F.

2 — To this we may add that to do every thing in the name of the Ld J— implies, that as we depend not on our own strength to fulfill the duties of our station & live according to the

will of G— but on the strenght of the holy
Spi of G— so also that we depend not on the
merit of our best deeds, the prevalence of our
prayers, the virtue of our praises, to render
them acceptable to G— but on the merit of
intercession of J, & expect all that we hope
for through his mediation with the F—
He hath told us that when we have done all
we are unprofitable servants & merit nothing
from our H F— that without him we can
do nothing— that whatever we shall desire of the F
in his name he will do it for us, that the
F— may be glorified in the son— that if
we love him we must keep his command
ments & then he will pray the F & he

will send us another comforter even the sp of truth & that he shall abide with us forever — That whatsoever good things we do, the same we shall receive of the Ld — & that of the Ld we shall receive the inheritance because we serve the Ld Xt —

I shall conclude this head by an observation of St Chrysostom — that to do all in the name of Xt, requires that we begin every day with prayers to him that he would bless & sanctify our worldly labours & enables us in the use & management of all temporal concerns to look to the honour of our R. & the glory of the F — that all things may be done as becomes Xans, those who have a con-

-fident hope of a better life even of a heavenly inheritance in the eternal kingdom of G–

This good man goes so far as to direct that before every work or business in which we are to be engaged, we beseech our Ld. that as he did all things in this world to the glory of G– he would enable us to follow his example, then saith he we do all things in the name of the Ld J. when we do all things so that G– may be glorifyed through him

The duty of family-prayer is I fear at the present day too much neglected, & yet of such importance do I estimate this duty, that I scarcely know how to rank it. The advantages arising from it are many & are very plain

The master of a family (or in his absence the Mistreſs) by devoutly attending morning & evening prayers with their family instructs both his childrens & servants in their duty & accustoms them to the use of prayer, he makes an open profeſsion of his own religion & thereby reminds himself of the obligations he is under to observe a consistent, that is, a religious ~~life~~ conduct through the day — & above all other things let it be remembered that he thereby draws down the bleſsing of G. on himself & his houſehold ~~[illegible]~~ —

If we are obliged to do all things in the name of the Ld J. we certainly are obliged to educate those committed to our care in a religious & devout manner — — If servants not only know their duty, but are sensible of the obligations they lie under from religion, to the performance of it, they surely will be more likely to fulfill their respective obligations, than if they did not. It is only a very hardened heart that can beseech A G — to keep them temperate in their meats & drinks & diligent in their callings — that he would direct them in all their ways & prosper them in the works of their hands — I say it is only a very hardened heart that can make these supplications & immediately break them by intemperance or idleneſs & or dishonesty — The same may be said with regard to children — but with this farther remarke, that just in proportion as Parents are liable to suffer the sever distreſses from the misconduct of their ch children, just in the same proportion ought they to be careful to bring them up in a religious way.— I do not say that family-prayers will prevent all the misconduct of children, but I do say, that a full & deep sense of religion, is the only way by which a bad child may be reforme & a good one preserved in the paths of virtue & propriety— whoever neglects the religious education of a child therefore, neglects the surest means under G— of preserving their own peace & quiet— But farther

If we at all believe in the being of a H

A G— if we believe in an overruling providence we ought not to neglect opening & closing the day by family devotion— If we were expect a blessing upon our petitions to the throne of grace, we surely may expect it on those occasions — When a Man has recommended ~~h~~ himself & all his concerns to the care & protection of A G — he may then either pursue his daily avocations, or lay his head on his pillow & take his rest For the Ld is his light & his salvation whom then shall he fear; the Ld is the strenght of his life of whom then ~~sha~~ shall he be afraid.

I shall finish this discours by one some general) remarks suggested by the subjects we have been upon —

In the first place) from the contents & matter of that portion of scripture from which the text is taken, we may learn that it is of great importance to us to preserve our own faith free from error — At the presto him shall be given & he shall have more abundance; but whosoever hath not, i.e., who by making no use of his knowledge is as if he had none, from him shall be taken away even that which he unprofitably hath

Whatsoever we do then in word or in deed, let us do all ~~th~~ to the honour of G— through J. Ct to whom &c

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cannot be added, nor diminished.

I have ever thought it a vain Attempt, to endeavou to convince a rigid Predestinarian. A Person must have a very bad Heart, or a very weak Head, to fall into so monstrous a Belief. Or at least, he must be under the Influence of very violent Prejudices. Either of these States will put him above the Power of the most solid Arguments.

Some misinterpreted, & misapplied Texts of Scripture are commonly alleged in Support of those horrid Positions. But as all those Texts are capable of a more reasonable Interpretation, they add Nothing to the Credibility of the Predestinarian Creed. Indeed, did the Bible assert them in possitive Terms, I could not believe them. I should rather imagine that some Corruption had crept into it, & altered its Reading: For I could sooner believe that God re

gar

ctions of Men; or indeed, that there was no God, than I could entertain such hard Notions concerning him.

To suppose that God could create a Being with such an exquisite Sensibility of Happineſs, and Misery, as Man evidently has; & that he could from Eternity decree, — & who can resist his Decrees? — that he should commit such & such Sins, that he might doom him to eternal Misery in Hell, is to represent him in a worse Light, than it is possible to represent the Devil. The Devil did not create us: He does not even force us to sin. — The most that he can do is to tempt us. — But God is our Creator: He brought us into Being without any Concurrence of our own; & if the predestinarian Scheme be true, he forces us to sin, that he may have the Satisfaction of executing eternal Vengeance upon us.

Shall we ascribe such Malig

By no means. — Let the stern-brow'd, narrow-hearted Predestinarian enjoy his own rancorous Disposition; & feast himself with the supposed inevitable Damnation of the far greater Part of the human Species. — Be it my Happiness, & my Glory, to consider God as the kind Patron & loving Father of all Mankind: Who brought them into Being only to make them happy, and who will promote their Happiness, by all the Means which infinite Benevolence can suggest, infinite Wisdom can contrive, or infinite Power can accomplish.

The Difficulty, however, recurs, of reconciling the Permission of so much Evil as has happened in the World, with the Goodness of God. It should seem better not to have made Men,

then

permitted so much Evil, as has happened among them.

It cannot be expected that a finite Creature should be able to comprehend, & account for all the Operations of infinite Wisdom. We know that one Property of this Wisdom is, to bring Good out of Evil. As God knew and saw the Evil that has happened, he knew & saw the Remedy. He knew also, that the Permiſsion of temporal & partial Evil, would be productive of infinite & eternal Happineſs. Upon no other Supposition, I confeſs, am I able to account, to my own Satisfaction, for all the Sin, & Misery that abound in the World.

Had Man never tranſgreſsed, there would have been no Room for the Display of the more amiable Qualities of the Deity. The Mercy of God

appears conspicuous in the Forgi
Sins & Errors of Man: And his Goodneſs is much heightened, by his wonderful Condescension in providing a Remedy, for the Evils & Miseries into which human Nature is fallen.— The present evil State of our Nature also, gives Opportunity for the Exercise of the heavenly Qualities of Benevolence, & Love, & Charity among Men. These Qualities open, & expand the human Heart, & bring it to the greatest poſsible Conformity to the divine Nature.

It does not seem poſsible, that an intelligent Being, a free, moral Agent, should be made permanently happy any otherwise than by Progreſsion. It must learn from Trial, & Experience, the different Tendencies, & Consequences of its own Actions.

When

thoroughly convinced, that Pain & Misery invariably attend Error, & Vice, and Sin; and that there is no poſsible Way to attain Happineſs, but by *willing* & *doing* that which is right & good; by living, & acting in Conformity to the Will of its Creator, then is its State of Bleſsedneſs fixed above all Danger of failing. Not from any Impoſsibility there is, that it should any more act wrong; because this Impoſsibility is only in God. But because Trial, & Experience have fixed the Will to that which is right; & it can no more will, or choose any Thing that is Evil, than it can will or choose to be unhappy.

When therefore, I see, Uneasineſs, & Pain, & Misery, tread close upon the Heels of Error,

&

& Vice, & Sin, in this World, I cannot
sidering them as Remedies, or Medicin
the kind Author of our Being has provided, for his fallen, degenerate, yet beloved Creature Man; in Order to bring him to seek his Happineſs, where only it can be found, in Obedience to, & Dependence upon his Creator; in Submiſsion to his Will, & in Conformity to his nature. — And could this Thought be extended to the Sufferings of the wretched in the next World, I confeſs, the Contemplation of it would give me Pleasure, above every Thing that this World can bestow.

To return to the Fall of Man.

Moses has informed us when, & how, human Nature fell from God by the Transgreſsion of its original Parents: And it hath ever been a

Subject

inquiry & Dispute among Christians, how, the whole Race of Mankind became involved in the Consequences of Adam's Sin.

The most common Opinion is, That God constituted Adam to be the common federal Head, or Representative of all his Posterity; & that they of Course are obliged to abide by the Consequences of his Transgression: God imputing his Crime to them, because he acted for them, as well as for himself.

There are two Objections to this Scheme, which I think material ones. One is this —

There is not the least Mention ~~made~~ in the Bible of any such Covenant made with Adam. Moses, indeed, says that God forbad Adam to eat of the Fruit of a certain Tree, under the Penalty of Death. And possibly our Translation doesn't give us the precise Meaning that Moses intended

to convey. — *Shall* & *Will* are two sig
future Tense, in the English Tongue; & in ma
Cases they materially alter the Sense, according
as the one, or the other is used. No other Language
that I am acquainted with, admits of this Variety.
—"In the Day that thou eatest thereof, thou *shalt*
"surely die", is a positive Prohibition, threatning
a severe Penalty. — "In the Day that thou eatest
"thereof, thou *wilt* surely die", imports only a Caution, or Warning of what would be the natural
Consequence of eating. I should incline to the
latter Sense; though as it stands in our Translation, I see Nothing in it like a Covenant.
It was the Command of a Superiour, which Adam was obliged to obey, or to submit to the Penalty. He had it not in his Choice, whether he
would agree to the Terms, or not; which is a

necessary

cumstance in making of Covenant. hough, therefore, Adam was the Head of his Posterity, inasmuch as he was their original Parent, yet we are under no Obligations to consider him as our covenanted Head or Representative, because no Intimation is given of any such Covenant.

The other Objection lies against the Imputation of Adam's Sin to his Posterity; & is this;— The Bible gives us no Intimation of any such Imputation. The Word is never used in the Bible to express the transfering of the Guilt of one Person to another. The Thing is absurd in itself, and directly impeaches the Justice of God. It is in Truth an Appendage of Predesti~~pa~~narianism, & no Part of divine Revelation.

The Question then still recurs, How came we to be involved in the Consequences of Adam's

Sin? I answer, By partaking of nature. The Parent can communicate to his Heirs, only that Nature which he himself has. Whatever Alterations were made in Adams Nature by his Fall; whatever evil Lusts, & Passions, & Tempers he introduced into it; he communicated them all to his Children, & they to theirs, & so on.

Original Sin is, therefore, the *Fault* of human Nature, only as *Fault* signifies *Imperfection*, & not as it signifies *a Crime*. It is undoubtedly a great Misfortune for a Man to be born of a faulty, corrupt, & perverse Nature; but it cannot be his Crime, because his Will was in no Way consenting to it. He had it not in his Choice, whether to be born of this Nature, or the other Nature, or, whether to be born at all, or not. It is a Matter in which he is purely passive, & by which he can contract no Guilt.

ever esteemed it a Crime that a Man received a ricketty, or gouty Constitution of Body from his Parents; & yet when he has got such a Constitution, he must submit to all the Inconveniencies of it, as much as if he had brought it upon himself. So although a Man contracts no Guilt by being born of Adam's fallen Nature, yet he must submit to all the Disorders of it, in Body & Mind; to all the Imperfection, & Evil, & Misery that are brought into it. Not from any arbitrary Decree, or Imputation of God; but from the very Necessity of Nature.

Mankind are, therefore, born into this World subject to all the Evils that Adam brought upon himself, his personal Guilt excepted. And it is the Design of the Christian Redemption, to open a Way for the Recovery of Mankind from this evil State: And from all the Error, Sin & Guilt, with

all the unhappy Consequences thereof, w
have brought upon themselves, by complying with
& indulging of, the evil Lusts & Passions of their
fallen Nature. In Short, To bring Mankind back
again to that State of Perfection, & Blessedness,
in which God created Adam, & which he designed
for the happy Portion of all his Posterity. — He
saw with Pity the miserable Condition into which
we had fallen, & he freely gave his Son for our
Redemption.

Considered in this Light, the Christian Religion must appear amiable; & is certainly intitled to the serious & candid Examination of every Man: And if it shall ~~appear~~ be found, to be calculated, to answer the End which it proposes, it will deserve their highest Reverence, & ought to meet with the most cordial Reception from them.

What

at we call the *Bible*, is the Revelation of God's Will, & the Hiſtory of his Dealings with Mankind, in Order to accomplish their Redemption; that is, the Restoration of their Nature to its first State. These are Matters, the Knowlege of which we could not obtain by the Use of our Reason; But for which we are indebted to the Mercy & Favour of God. As our Knowlege in these Points must be drawn from the Bible, & not from Reason; So the proper Province of Reason in this Case, is to judge of the Matter of Fact. That is, To judge of the Evidence, & to determine whether the Bible be really & truly what it pretends to be, – A Revelation from God. And then to discover, & determine what God has declared to us, & what he requires of us in the Bible.

It is far from being my Design to disparage human Reason. I readily allow it to be the best Gift of God to Man. In some Sen rable even to Revelation, because without Revelation could be of no Manner of Use. I am willing to ascribe as much Authority, & as great Influence to it in Religion, as in the common Affairs of Life; & I think, it is not intitled to more.

In many; in innumerable Instances, we find Reason to be but a blind, & insufficient Guide, in the Management of the Concerns of this World. Take away Experience & Reason will be found incapable of conducting the most ordinary Affairs. So in the Concerns of the next World, If we reject all Principles of Religion which are not deducible from Reason, or comprehensible by it, we shall involve ourselves in numberless Errors, & Uncertainties. Trust to Reason alone, & it will prove a blind Guide, or rather a wild

and

ring Light. — Here Revelation, or Faith, is the Belief of Revelation, is just as ne- sary an Aſsistant to Reason, as Experience is, in the Conduct of our worldly Affairs. The true Busineſs of Reason, therefore, is to judge of the Credibility of a Revelation, & to discover what it contains. But it is no competent Judge of the Fitneſs, & Propriety of those Methods which God has taken to redeem & save Mankind. In most Instances, indeed, this Propriety is apparent; and this is a strong Presumption that the same Propriety is observed, in Matters which our finite, & limited Understandings can not comprehend. For that there should be Mysteries in the Scheme of Man's Redemption, that is, some things which we cannot comprehend, is certainly no more strange, than that there should be Mysteries in our present Life. The Union of the Soul & Body, so as of two dis-

tinct things to make one Man: The Ex
the human Will, Memory &c: are as real, a
Mysteries as any in the christian Religion.

I shall return from this Digression, after making one Remark. — That to give ourselves up intirely to the Conduct of our own Reason in Matters of Religion, disclaiming all Assistance from Revelation, would lead us into endless Doubts & Uncertainties. — To discard Reason intirely, is the Height of Enthusiasm. But Reason & Faith conjoined are the Basis of true, manly & sober Religion; the fruitful Source of Virtue & Holiness.

Let us now see what the Bible teacheth us, concerning the Redemption of fallen Man, by Jesus Christ.

In the Bible, then, we learn, That the Son of God took human Nature upon him, being miraculously born of a Woman only. That in this Nature

he

a most holy & ſinleſs Life; yeilding a per-
edience to the whole Will of God; renouncing entirely a worldly Happineſs, & all fleshly Gratifications. That he taught a most pure, & heavenly Doctrine; prohibiting all Evil, even in Thought, and requiring universal Goodneſs & Holineſs in all our Words & Actions. That after a Life ſpent in doing Good, & establishing his own divine Miſsion by a Series of the most benevolent Miracles, he willingly gave himself up to die upon the Croſs, a Sacrifice, or Attonement to God for the Sins of the World. That he rose again the third Day from the Dead, & after some Time ascended visibly into Heaven; And sent the bleſsed Gift of the Holy Spirit upon his Apostles & Followers, to conduct them through this World to the Happineſs of Heaven. That he is now our Advocate with God, & will at the last Day be our Judge.

In Order to see the *Propriety* of our S doing all this in our Nature, it will be necessary to return to the Fall of Adam, & consider a little more particularly the Meaning of that Prohibition, or Caution that was given him, respecting the Tree of Knowlege, — *In the Day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die*; literally, *dying thou shalt*, or *wilt die*. (Gen. 2.17)

The first Enquiry to be made here, is into the Meaning of *dying* or of *Death*. The general Sense in which the Word Death is used in the Scripture, & in common Discourse, is to signify the Seperation of the Soul from the Body. — It is sometimes used to express a State of Error, & Vice, & Sin; And sometimes a State of Misery in the next World. — It never signifies a ceasing to exist, as some have taught, who suppose that a

total

tinction of Being was the Punishment with which God threatned Adam.

Nor can I think that the common Opinion, which supposeth that the Threatning of God imported a State of Mortality — as though he had said, *In the Day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely become mortal*, or *liable to Death*, — comes up to the Meaning, or Force of the Expression used by Moses. The Threatning seems to import immediate Death; and immediate Death seems to have been the Consequence of his Transgression. For, consider, Death does not mean the End of our Existance, but the End of a certain Mode of existing. By Death in the ordinary Sense of the Word, we do not mean a ceasing to exist, but the ceasing of our present Life. We die, indeed, to this World, but we acquire the Life of the next World.

God had given to Adam a Life, a Soul, such as to his Wisdom seemed best. He threatned him with, or cautioned him against, the fatal Consequence of eating of the Fruit of a certain Tree, which was Poison & Destruction to his Nature. If God threatned Adam, he undoubtedly executed his Threat. If he cautioned him, he certainly cautioned him according to Truth. And we, in Fact, find, That the Effect of this Fruit was immediate. The Eyes of them both were opened, & they saw that they were naked. They perceived That they had divested themselves of the heavenly Nature of Paradise, with all its holy Tempers & Dispositions; & that they had gotten a new Nature, even this mortal, animal Flesh & Blood, with which we are now incumbred; together with its evil Paſsions, & Lusts, & Appetites; & they

were

lamed. Nay more; Misery, Horror & Dispair took Hold upon them: They fled from the Presence of their all-bountiful, ever-loving Creator, & foolishly endeavoured to hide themselves among the Trees of the Garden.

Adam, therefore, really, & truly died the very Day that he transgressed. He killed that Nature, & Life which he received from God, & he acquired a new Nature & Life, in which all his Posterity have been born. He put an End to that perfect & holy State in which God created him; & he obtained in the Room of it, a State of Error, & Vice, & Sin.* A Period was made to the Bliss & Happiness which he enjoy'd, & he fell into Misery, Horror & Dispair.

Consider, now, what is necessary to be done for his Redemption. — That Life which he acquired by his Fall, must be made to cease, & that Life which he lost by his Fall, must be revived in him. That State of Error, & Vice, & Sin i

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* he lost his spiritual nature —

he fell, must be corrected & done away, & that State of Holineſs & Perfection which he lost must be renewed. That Misery, Horror & Despair which became his wretched Portion, must be remedied, & ~~done away~~ removed; & he must be restored to that State of Bliſs & Happineſs which he had lost. And whatever was neceſsary to be done for Adam in this Case, was also neceſsary to be done for his whole Posterity.

Here the Goodneſs of God prevented even his Wishes. One Property of the divine Nature is to bring Good out of Evil. Another Property is to over-rule, & stop the Progreſs of Evil, as much as is poſsible to be done; that is, as much as is consistent with that Freedom of Will, which all intelligent Creatures must be endowed with.— No sooner had Man sinned, than God was in

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Reconciling the World – human Nature – unto himself.

God had made the World by his Son: He had created Man in the Likeneſs of his Son; for he made Man in his own Image, (Gen. 1.27); & the Image of the Father is the Son: The Son is also the Preserver & Upholder of the Universe. (Heb. 1. 2, 3. – Coloſs. 1. 15–19). And now the Son became his Redeemer; That in all Things, or among all – he might have the Pre-eminence. – The Seed of the Woman, said God, shall bruise the Serpents Head.

If Nothing more was meant by this Expreſsion, than that some great Punishment should be inflicted upon the old Serpent who had beguiled Adam, it could have had little, or no Influence upon the Recovery of Mankind. Something wanted to be done within Man, – in the very Center *of his Being*, in Order to save him. gotten a crooked, perverse, & serpentine Nature, which required to be bruised, crushed, brought to Nothing in him; That the holy, heavenly Nature which he had lost, might be renewed in him.

Every Word of God is attended with Power. He that said — Let there be Light, & there was Light, He now, as I take it, imparted to Adam, & consequently to his whole Posterity, a new Principle, or Sensibility of Goodneſs, called *the Seed of the Woman*; Something of the holy Nature of Christ, in Order to make it poſsible for Adam to recover again that holy Nature which he had lost. This shews how Christ was the Saviour of Men before he personally appeared in the World; because he was in them the Bruiser of the Serpent, the Corrector of their evil Tempers & Paſsions,

&

Author, & Finisher of all the Virtue & Goodneſs that shewed itself among Men.

To cultivate & bring to Perfection this Principle of Goodneſs, which was in Man like a Seed in the Earth, was the End & Design of all the Laws & religious Institutions, which in different Ages God gave to Mankind; & which he varied according as their Exigencies required. Till in the Fulneſs of Time, that is, when his infinite Wisdom saw best, he sent his Son really, & visibly to take the fallen human Nature upon him, in Order to accomplish its Redemption.

Hitherto we have considered God, as the particular Creator, & loving Father of every ~~of every~~ individual Descendant of Adam; And who will, undoubtedly, do every thing, that his Wisdom sees best, to promote the highest, that is, the eter piness of every Individual. But Truth will oblige us to consider God also, as the common Creator, Lawgiver, & Governor of all mankind. Under this Character open & public Obedience is due to him, as well as inward Reverence.

It is of the utmost Consequence to any Government that its Laws be obeyed; because it is to be presumed that they all tend, —especially the Laws of an all-perfect, all-gracious God, — to the general Happiness of the whole. When the Laws are broken, Evil must of Consequence happen to the Community: And if the Laws are suffered to be broken with Impunity, the Government is brought into Contempt. Open & public Reparation, must therefore be made for

every

Breach of the Laws, or open & public Punishment must be inflicted, that others may be affraid to offend. For the Authority of Government must be maintained, in Order to secure the Benefits & Blessings of it.

By the Transgression of Adam, public Dishonour was done to God, & the good Effects of his moral Government of the World, in a great Measure fustrated. The same Thing, in some Degree, happens, by every Transgression of his Descendants. Neither Adam, nor his Posterity, were able to make Reparation for the Dishonour thus brought upon the Governor of the Universe, any otherwise than by submiting to the Consequences of their Transgressions — everlasting Misery.

Love, & Goodness, & Mercy are the Nature of God. In Love, & Goodness, & Mercy he provided this tem-

poral State in which we now live, in o
give Mankind a Space, an Opportunity to have the ruinous Consequences of the Fall repaired, that they might become again capable of Happiness with him. And he provided a Substitute, or Representative for them: One that was able to make sufficient Satisfaction, & Reparation for the Dishonour that had been brought upon himself, as Governor of the Universe; That his Lenity to Men, might not encourage other intelligent Beings to disobey the Laws of their Maker.

In this Sense, I take it, the Death of Christ was an Attonement to God; a Satisfaction to the divine Justice, for the Sins of the World. And in this Sense are all those Expressions of the Scriptures to be understood, which speak of his dying in our Stead; of his bearing our Sins; of his being the

Propitiatio

tion for our Sins; of his *being made Sin*—that is a Sin-Offering—*for us*.

Other Benefits there are which accrue to us from the Death of Christ, & which shall, *by & by*, be taken Notice of. But before we depart from this Point, it will be best to examin, Whether this vicarious Satisfaction be *just* & *reasonable* in itself? And whether it will answer the End proposed,—secure Reverence, & Obedience to the Laws of God?

If the Substitute is willing to submit to the Terms, & by doing so, brings no Injury upon any other Being;—If the Party offended be willing to accept the Satisfaction of a Substitute, The Thing is *just*.

If a greater Good can be obtained by this vicarious Satisfaction, than could be obtained by exacting the full Penalty upon the Offenders personally, It is reasonable.

Now the Willingness of Christ to becom Substitute, & of God to accept his Satisfaction, are supposed, as the Foundation of this Proceedure. It does not appear, that any Injury can thereby accrue to any other Being. — It is also certain, that the eternal Happiness, even of Part of the human Species, is a greater Good, than the everlasting Misery of the whole Species. — The only Thing that is doubtful is, Whether the Authority of Almighty God, the Governor of the Universe, can be sufficiently secured in this Way.

I will, in few Words, state the Case, & let Reason determine. — Adam sinned, & involved himself & his whole Posterity in Misery, — the natural, as well as threatned Consequence of his Sin. The Son of God became his Substitute, & made Satisfaction to the divine Justice for him; & he, & his Posterity were put

into

State, or under a Method, by which they may again recover what they had lost. — Would any reasonable Being argue from hence in this manner? There can be no great Danger in disobeying of God. Adam has sinned, & is redeemed; I therefore may safely sin, because I shall certainly be redeemed. — Would he not rather reason thus? I see that God will exact the Penalty of Disobedience. Rather than suffer his Government to be brought into Contempt, he hath permitted Innocence to bear the Penalty of the Guilty. Fortunate, indeed, hath Adam been in finding a Redeemer: But if I sin, Where shall I find one that will die for me? I must, therefore, obey, or be miserable.

Besides, many of the Consequences of Adam's Sin, still lye heavy upon us; even all the Evils which we suffer in this World, & all that we dre next. This joined to the foregoing Consideration, will, I think, effectually secure the Honour & Authority of God, as Governor of the Universe, among all the different Orders of intelligent Beings.

But however the Justice of God may be satisfied this Way; we find the *Vengeance* of God, revealed in the Gospel, against Sinners. Did not the Wrath of God want to be appeased, as well as his Justice satisfied? And is not the Death of Christ that which appeases the Wrath of God, as well as satisfies the Justice of God?

God, I know, has too *often* been represented by hot headed Zealots of all Religions, & what is very strange, by all Sects of the christian Religion, as a wrathful, vindictive Being, ever armed

with

Rage & Fury; & ever ready to discharge them with unrelenting Vengeance upon the Heads of erring Mortals. But certainly the Bible properly attended to, will shew him in a much more amiable Light. We shall there find his grand Characteristic to be Love, & Gentleness, & Long-suffering, even to the greatest Sinners. It was his Love that gave his Son for the Redemption of the World; & the same Love gives us every thing that we enjoy in this World, & is the Foundation of all our Hopes with Regard to the next World.

The Scriptures make Mention of the Wrath of God in many Places, & represent its Effects to be very terrible against impenitent Sinners. And beyond all Doubt, an evil, wicked Life must end in Misery unspeakable. But this Misery seems rather to be the necessary, & natural Consequence of Sin, than the Effect of any vindictive [illegible] in God.

Let it be considered that the same Conduct on the Part of God, often has very different, sometimes opposite Effects, on different Men. The Goodness of God we know, has a natural Tendency to lead Men to Repentance, & yet some Men are by it, hardened in Sin.

It was the Goodness of God that endeavoured to convince Pharaoh, that he was the God of all Nature, & that it was his Will, that the Israelites should be dismissed from their Slavery. And yet all the Miracles that the Love of God wrought for his Conviction, proved the Occasion of hardening him in his Impiety. Insomuch that God is said to have hardened his Heart. Not that God exerted any Power upon the Heart of Pharaoh to make it hard; But that the Goodness of God which really

had

Tendency to soften his Heart, & bring him to submit to the God of the Universe, had this unhappy Effect upon him.

Those Methods, also, which God used for the Repentance, & Amendment of the Jews, served only to confirm them in Impiety. So that God is said to have made their Hearts gross; to have shut their Eyes, & closed their Ears. Whereas, it was only the perverse Use they made, of that Goodness of God which ought to have led them to Repentance; their resisting those Means of Conviction which God gave them, that produced this Effect. In these Instances, even the Goodness of God had finally the same Consequences which are ordinarily produced by Wrath among Men.

As Wrath is ascribed to God in the Scriptures, so are Arms, Hands, Eyes. Do we from hence conclude, that God has all the Parts of an human Body? By no Means. By these Expressions we understand the Power, & Knowlege of God. — God is also said to repent, to grieve. Do we understand these Phrases literally? Why then must we suppose God to be an angry, enraged, furious, vindictive Being? Why must we ascribe to him one of the greatest Infirmities, one of the most baneful Passions of human Nature, because the Scriptures speak of the Wrath of God? The Scriptures were written for man, but the End of writing them would have been defeated, had not their Language been accomodated to the Capacity of Man.

What then are we to understand by the Wrath of God? I know not how to express myself better than to say, That it is a State of Contrariety & Opposition, between the holy Nature of God, & the sinful Nature of Man. Sin excited this Contrariety, & Sin keeps it up. If man continues finally impenitent, & unreclaimed, this Contrariety will have all the dismal Consequences that the most inflamed Wrath could produce. But all the appeasing that this Wrath wants, is, That the Offender returns to his Duty; That he ceases from Sin, & gives himself up, to be governed, & directed intirely, by the Will of God: Whenever this happens, all Contrariety between God & Man ceases. And this truly & properly speaking is the only real Forgiveneſs of Sins.

While a Man goes on in an evil, wicked Course of Life, the Scriptures speak of him, as *treasuring up to himself Wrath, against the Day of Wrath, &*

Revelation

Revelation of the righteous Judgment of G—

2.5] Not that he excites any angry, furious, revengful Emotions in God. But he raises up an evil, wrathful State of Opposition between himself & his Creator. And if he continues finally impenitent, he will finally be excluded from all Happiness with his Creator; which implies as great, & as real a State of Anguish & misery, as any Being can possibly fall into. But whenever he repents & forsakes his Sins, & turns to God in Well-doing, seeking for Glory, Honour & Immortality with God, this wrathful State ceases; the Opposition between him & his Creator, is at an End. Instead of Indignation, & Wrath; Tribulation & Anguish; God will render to him, Glory, Honour & Peace, even eternal Life. (See Romans 2. 4—10).

But is not all this satisfying of the Justice, & appeasin

& appeasing of the Wrath of God, & the Forgiveness of our Sins, effected in the Way of Imputation? — I answer; Not at all. There is Nothing like Imputation in it.

The Advocates for the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness, I suppose, mean, that it is so imputed to us, as that we may reckon it our own; & are by it, to be accounted as righteous by God, as if we had never sinned, — for the Righteousness of Christ; is his being free from all Sin. — If they mean not as much as this, they are meer Players upon Words, & deserve no Notice.

According to this Scheme, we may be as righteous as Christ is; For Christ has no Righteousness but his own, whereby he is righteous; And if we have the Righteousness of Christ so imputed to us, as to make it our own, then are we as righteous as Christ. But this is an arrant Falsehood. We all have sinned; & however we may have repented, & forsaken our Sins, & obtained Forgiveness & Reconciliation with God; yet it never will be true of us, that we have no Sin; that we have not sinned; And therefore saith S. John, If we say that we have no Sin, we deceive ourselves, & the Truth is not in us. (1 Epist. 1. 8).

According to this Scheme, I see not what Need there was of Christ's Death, or any Thing he did; For if by Imputation we may be made as righteous as Christ, then Imputation might have done as well without Christ's Death, as with it.

Again: If Imputation will do, then all Men may be saved, if God has but Goodness enough to save them. For if the Righteousness of Christ, by being imputed could make 500 Men holy, it might in the same Way make every Descendant of Adam holy, if God pleased.

As to those Texts of Scripture which seem to attribute the Righteousness of Christ to us, they are all capable of a much more reasonable Interpretation. The two following are what I have commonly heard produced. 1 Cor. 1.30; Where Christ is said to be *made unto us, Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification & Redemption*. But there is not a Word *said* about Imputation here; & if any Thing is *meant* about it, it must relate to the Redemption, as well as the Righteousness of Christ: And then we should not be *really* & *truly*, but only *imputatively* redeemed. — The true Meaning of those Words is undoubtedly this, That Christ is in us the Author of all Goodness

neſs; of real & true Wisdom & Righteouſneſs; tification & Redemption.

The other Text is Rom. 5.19; *For as by one Man's Disobedience many were made Sinners; So by the Obedience of one, shall many be made righteous*. But this is evidently against them, till they can prove that we became Sinners, only by the Imputation of Adam's Sin to us: Which is a harder Task than any Man in his Senses will attempt. Adam's Disobedience brought an evil Nature upon his Posterity, by complying with which, we have become really Sinners; & from Christ we must have a holy Nature, by obeying of which we may become really righteous.

To say no worse of this Imputation-Scheme, It is a meer childish Rattle, & a Man of Sense ought to be ashamed to open his Mouth in Defence

-rence of it. It is as impossible that a sinful Man should be made holy by Imputation, as it is that a sick Man should be made well; or a black Man White, by Imputation.

If by the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness, no more be meant, than that God forgives our Sins for Christ's Sake, it would, I think, be best to express it in those Words. — There is however a manifest Difference between imputing the Righteousness of one Person to another, & forgiving one Person for the Sake of another.

Suppose I had done you some great Injury, & you had it in your Power to punish me very severely; & a Friend of yours should have Goodness enough to intercede for me, & should engage to make you such Reparation for the Injury I had done you, as you thought sufficient. You might out of Regard to your Friend forgive me, so far as not to punish me; But you never could impute the Goodneſs of your Friend to me. You would still look upon me as a base & wicked Man, unworthy of any Regard, till you saw evidently that I was reformed, & was incapable any more of doing you wrong.

This Instance is easily applied. So that allowing the Imputation-Scheme to be true, It would not answer the End proposed. The most it could do, would be to screen us from the positive Infliction of Punishment from God: It could not make us capable of heavenly Happineſs; because it would leave us under the full Power of our evil Lusts, & Paſsions, & Appetites: Under the full Effect of all the natural Consequences of Sin.

To return from this Digression.

Had Nothing more been necessary for the Salvation of Adam, than to make Satisfaction to the divine Justice, I see not, why all Men might not have been saved through the Means of that full Satisfaction that was made by Christ. But Adam's Fall was deeper, than that it could be remedied by this alone. He had destroyed that Nature which he had received from God, & which made him susceptable of heavenly Happiness: and he had gotten an evil Nature of Lust & Sin, which involved him in Misery. In Order to save him, the evil Nature which he had acquired, must be brought to Nothing in him, & the divine Nature which he had lost must be renewed in him.

I have already observed that a divine Principle, or a Sensibility of Goodness was imparted to

Adam, when God gave him the Promise of a S- our, the Seed of the Woman.+ This Sensibility & Goodness, is the only Foundation of Vertue & Holiness in Man. Without it he would have no Capacity of either. To bring this to Perfection in Man, is the End & Design of all that Christ hath done.

In the same Proportion as this is cherished & attended to, it will grow & increase; & in the same Proportion, the fallen Nature will decline & die away. But if it be checked & suppressed, it will ~~decline~~ become weak, & the evil Lusts & Propensities of our fallen Nature will gather Strength.

This Principle God always loves, & always elects, because it is something of his own Likeness & Nature. He cannot turn away from it, nor

reject

+ This is continued —

reject it. Its Breathings after him he always regards; & always meets his Tendencies towards him.

This it is which makes Man susceptable of the Influences, & Inspirations of the holy Spirit: And when this is quite stiffled & extinguished, the unhappy Person is in a State of Reprobation, & is no longer capable of receiving any Good from God.

This is the Foundation, or Seed of the new Creature, or new Man; & our spiritual Regeneration consists in having this Seed, brought to a compleat & perfect Birth in us. This is that in us which sinneth not, of which S. John speaks, 1 Epist. 3.9.

The whole Tendency of the Gospel is to bring Men to the Cultivation of this Principle; or in other Words, To the Practice of Virtue & Holineſs. To accomplish this; the sinleſs Life of Christ hath great Power, by Way of Example: His heavenly Doctrines, by Way of Instruction: And the Contemplation of his Sufferings & Death; of his Resurrection and Ascention, & of his coming again to judge the World, are a most powerful Engine, to bring Men from the Indulgence of the evil Lusts, & Paſsions, & Tempers of their fallen Nature, to that Holineſs & Virtue which God requires. All that Christ said, or did, or taught, or suffered; all the Dispensations of God's Providence; all the Influences of his Spirit; all the Writings of the Prophets, Apostles & Evangelists, will be lost upon us; neither Prayers, nor Preaching, nor Sacraments can do us any Good; unleſs they lead us to mortify the Lusts, & Paſsions and Tempers of our fallen Nature. Unleſs all the Virtues of the christian Life be brought forth, & be growing

and

& increasing in us.

When we are so convinced of the evil Tendency of the Lusts, & Passions & Tempers of our fallen Nature; as to turn from them, resist them, deny them, & keep them under, then do we put off the Old Man, with his corrupt Deeds. And when we aspire after that Holiness which the Gospel requires, living in the Virtues of Humility, Charity, & Purity, copying the Example of Christ's most holy Life, Then do we put on the new Man, which is renewed after the Image of God. (Colos. 3.10 – Eph. 4. 24). — Then are we regenerate, – have a new Nature; Then are we the Children, the Elect, the Beloved of God: And if we go on persevering & growing in Virtue & Holiness to the End of our Lives, we shall receive perfect & compleat Redemption from all the Evils of our fallen Nature; & perfect & compleat Happineſs with God, the Father of our Spirits.

The Foundation of all this must be Faith. We must believe that our natural Lusts, & Paſsions tend to Evil, & will make us miserable, before we shall resist & deny them. We must believe that Virtue & Holineſs are the only poſsible Foundation of Happineſs with God, before we shall be induced to practice them. We must believe what God declares, before we can be brought to obey what he commands.

For, however religious Contention may have multiplied the Definitions of Faith, & obscured its Nature, in a Theological Sense, it can be no more than the Belief of what God says: And Christian Faith in particular, is the Belief of the Christian Revelation, that is of the Gospel. When we believe the Gospel so as to obey it, & regulate our Lives by it, then it has its proper Effect upon us: Then are we Christians indeed.

The Gospel can do us no Good, unleſs we obey it; We can not obey it, unleſs we believe it. — Therefore is there so much attributed to Faith in the New Testament, especially by S. Paul; who frequently by that Term, distinguishes the Gospel of Christ from the Law of Moses. In this Sense is he to be understood when he sets Faith in Opposition to Works, & ascribes the whole of our Salvation to Faith, without any Regard to Works. For, in those Paſsages, he only aſserts that we are saved by the Gospel, which teacheth the Redemption of the World by Christ, & not by the Laws, & ceremonial Institutions of Moses.

Some, I know, have taught that we are justified, & saved by Faith alone, considered distinctly from Holineſs & Virtue; from Obedience to God, or Works of any Kind. But the Gospel gives no Foundation to so idle a Scheme. A Scheme which sober Sense must ever disavow. The true Doctrine of the Gospel is, *Salvation by Faith & Works*; That is; By believing the Revelation of God by his Son, & conforming our Lives to it.

The Design of the Gospel is to bring Men from Sin to Holineſs; that they might be delivered from all the Evil & Misery of their fallen Nature, & restored to that Bleſsedneſs which Adam lost by his Disobedience; & thence advanced to all the Happineſs & Glory, which their Nature is capable of receiving from their bounteous Creator. And that we might not fail of attaining this bleſsed State, through the Infirmity of our present Nature; through our Inability to reach that Holineſs which the Gospel requires, God hath been graciously pleased to give ~~them~~ us his Holy Spirit; not for the Purpose of working Miracles, but to produce, & perfect Holiness in us.

If we attend to the Scriptures, & study honestly our own Tempers, & Dispositions, it will be no hard Matter to distinguish what the Influences of the Spirit are, nor to determine when we have them. The Fruit of the Spirit, said S. Paul (Gal. 5. 22), is Love, Joy, Peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, – meaning here Fidelity, or Faithfulness, – Meekness, Temperance – Where these Tempers, & Dispositions are, there undoubtedly is the Holy Spirit; because he cannot produce these Fruits where he is not. And if these Virtues are the Fruit of the Spirit, then all Wishes, Desires & Endeavours after these Virtues, are Influences from the Spirit.

And by Parity of reasoning, all holy Desires, & virtuous Purposes, & pious Wishes are from the Spirit. When we comply with them, & turn our Minds to fulfill them, we co-operate with the Spirit, we are led by the Spirit. But if we check, & suppress, & turn away from them, after evil Purposes, & Designs, we quench, & grieve, & drive away the Spirit.

To the Goodness of God we owe these Influences of the Spirit. For this Reason they are called *The Grace*, that is the Favour of God to us. For the same Reason is the Gospel sometimes called, *The Grace of God*. And indeed the general Meaning of the Word *Grace* is *Favour*, or something equivalent, as Mercy, Goodness &c. & I apprehend, that our Translation of the New Testament would have been considerably more intelligible to the common People, had not the Translators confined themselves so closely to the Word Grace.

When we look upon this Grace of God, or the Influences of the Spirit, as the Effect of the Kindness, & Love of God towards us; as being intended to beget, & improve in us, holy & heavenly Tempers; to excite us to deny the evil Lusts, & appetites of our fallen Nature; to enable us to resist Temptations of every Kind, & to build us up in Holiness & Virtue, we consider the Matter in its true Light. But if we fall into the common Error of supposing God's Grace to be irresistable; & that when it comes upon us, it will be in some extraordinary Way, & will produce very extraordinary, if not miraculous, Effects; working an intire Change in our Nature, & all manner of Holiness in us, not only without our Concurrence, but even against our Will; We shall be in great Danger of loosing all the Advantages of it. For finding that we can resist good Desires & virtuous Purposes, we shall not consider *them* as the Influences of God's Spirit; & therefore, we shall be apt to resist them with the less Reluctance. — We shall be also apt to rest quietly under the Dominion of our evil Lusts, & Habits, from a false Supposition, that God has not yet given us his Grace; Rightly concluding, that we can do Nothing without it; & falsely concluding, that when it comes, it will do all for us, whether we will or not.

The Supposition of any irresistable Influence, upon such a Creature as Man, is an Absurdity. Could it take Place, his Nature would be instantly destroyed. He would be no longer a moral Agent; no longer capable of Virtue & Vice;

no longer accountable for his Actions.

The Operation, therefore, of God's Grace, or of his Spirit, upon Man must be in a Way consistent with the Nature of Man: That is, It must be by Way of Influence, & not an irresistable Force. For if Force could make Man holy; Force might make him happy; & then there would be no Need of Holiness at all.

What, therefore, the holy Spirit does for us, it does by exciting, cherishing, & encouraging in us good Desires, virtuous Purposes, & holy Tempers; & by exciting & enablg us, to repress & keep under, those that are evil. So far forth as we give up ourselves to comply with it; That is, To comply with every Thing that is good, & to resist, deny, & keep under every Thing that is Evil; So far forth are we led by the Spirit; & so far forth are we the Children of God. And if we do so fully, intirely; we are fully & intirely in that State of Life, in which the Christian Religion was intended to place us; — a State of perfect Obedience, & absolute Submission to the Will of God; Being in all Things led & governed by his Spirit.

This State is, I know by most People supposed to be absolutly unattainable in this Life. Even the greatest Pretenders to Religion, seem to remain easy, & quiet, & satisfied under the horrid Slavery of Lust & Sin, upon the Supposition that Lust & Sin are absolutly invincible. And yet it may be incontestably proved that the ~~Gosp~~ Gospel demands perfect Obedience from us. If any one says otherwise, Let him tell me what Sin? What evil Lust? what wicked Temper, or Passion is allowed, or tollerated by the Religion of Christ? If he confesses, as confess he must, that it allows of no Sin, neither in Kind nor Degree; Then, I say, it requires of us perfect Holineſs. And it furnishes a Power able to accomplish what it requires; even the Spirit of God, whose Strength in us will be greater or leſs, in the same Proportion as we give ourselves up to be governed by him; or turn away from his holy Inspirations, after the evil Lusts, & Tempers, & Paſsions of our Nature.

It is not my Meaning that no Person is acceptable to God, or will finally be happy with him, but he who in this Life attains this State; But that none are in the State which the Gospel requires, but they only who are in the Road to this Perfection: They who maintain a continual Combat with their Lusts, & evil Tempers, & Paſsions; who are constantly, though poſsibly slowly, gaining Ground against them: Who are daily increasing in Habits, & Tempers of Virtue

&

& Goodness; in all the Works of Holiness, which are the Fruits of the Spirit of God. They only who go on from Strength to Strength, shall appear before God in Zion, or the heavenly Jerusalem.

The Scriptures possitively assert, that Christ came into the World, to destroy the Works of the ~~Works of the~~ Devil; that is, To root out ~~[illegible]~~ all Kinds, & every Degree of Sin & Wickedness. (1 Jno. 3. 8). S. Paul insists absolutly upon our denying Ungodliness, & worldly Lusts, & living godly, righteously, & soberly in this World; that we may with Confidence of Salvation, look for the glorious Appearing, of the great God, & our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all Iniquity, & purify to himself a peculiar

People zealous of good Works. (Tit. 2.12 &c). Again, he exhorts the Corinthians – 2 Epist. 7.1 – To cleanse themselves from *all* Filthiness of the Flesh & Spirit, *perfecting* Holiness in the Fear of God. He also acquaints the Colossians, (4.12) How fervently Epaphras prayed for them, That they might stand *perfect & complete in the whole Will of* God. And he concludes his Epistle to the Hebrews (13.21) with beseeching the God of Peace, that he would make them *perfect in every good Work*, to do his Will, working in them that which was well pleasing in his Sight. — St. Peter, in like Manner, requires us to be holy, as he that hath called us is holy, *in all Manner of Conversation*. (1 Epist. 1.15) And again (5.10) The God of all Grace, — make you *perfect*, stablish, strengthen, settle you. St James also, (1.4) Let Patience have her perfect Work, that ye may be perfect, & entire, wanting, - being defective in - Nothing.

Laying all these Authorities together; & many others might be added; it seems not a little Strange, that the Possibility of attaining such a State, should be so generally denied by all Denominations of Christians. And yet a little attention to the prevailing Systems of Divinity, will abate our Wonder in this Matter.

The Predestinarian will tell us, that all our Salvation depends upon the Decree of God in our Favour, & not at all upon any Degree of Holiness that we may acquire.

The Advocates for Imputation, are confident, That all depends upon the Righteousness

neſs of Christ imputed to us; which like an Over-Garment, will cover, & hide all our Deficiencies in Holineſs & Virtue.

Others affirm that Faith is all: That Holineſs & Virtue, Works of any Kind, are meer filthy Rags, of no Estimation in the Sight of God; of no Avail to Justification.

Some, again, rely wholly upon the irresistable Grace of God; which they imagine is to come upon them, in some lucky Moment; & work an intire Change of their Nature, making them, in an Instant, as holy as God would have them.

These Errors which have crept in, & made such amazing Progreſs, have been as destructive to real Righteousneſs, & Holineſs of Life among Protestants, as ever Indulgences, Penances, Pilgrimages & Relicks were among Roman-Catholics.

Had it not been for Predestination; the Notion of an imaginary, imputative Righteousness; of an empty, dead Faith; of the Irresistability of divine Grace; & the slavish Opinion of the Invincibleness of Sin, I cannot see, but that the Members of the better-reformed, protestant Churches would in general have proved excellent Christians; & would have abounded in all the Works of Righteousness & Holiness, unto the Praise & Glory of God. Whereas, I question, whether they at present exceed the Romans the least Tittle in real Virtue & Goodness, notwithstanding all our Boasts of Reformation, & a more pure Religion.

When I hear People resting their whole Salvation upon any of those Schemes, it always puts me in mind of the Similitude used by the Prophet, (Isaiah 29.8) It shall be even as when a hungry Man dreameth, & behold he eateth, but he awaketh, and ~~behold~~ his Soul is empty: Or when a thirsty Man *dreameth, & behold he drinketh; but he awaketh, & behold he is faint.* — This is; this must ever be the Unhappineſs of all those, who substitute something else, in the Room of that real Sanctity of Life, which God requires. They who hunger & thirst after *real* Righteousneſs, shall be filled. The Dew of divine Grace will refresh them, & make them fruitfull in all the Works of Holineſs. But they who hunger & thirst, — be their Wants ever so real — after an Imagination of Righteousneſs, shall be fed only in Imagination: and when they awake from their Dream, they will find themselves destitute of all Good.

Far be it from me to recommend the flaunting Hypocrisy of those Perfectionists, who boast that they cannot Sin. That is a State which belongs to God only, & is incompatible to any Creature

ture!

Was I to define Christian Perfection, I would say, That it was the right Performance of all the Duties that Christianity requires. This State, I doubt not, has been attained by Numbers.

It was said, Page 38, That there are other Benefits accruing to us from the Death of Christ, besides his being an Attonement to the divine Justice for the Sins of the World: And in Page 57, his Death mentioned as a most powerful Motive to bring men to Repentance, & Amendment of Life.

There is one other Benefit too material to be passed over; And that is, That by his Death & Resurrection he overcame Death, & obtained for us the Resurrection of our Bodies at the last Day.— Death was the threatned, as well as natural Consequence of Sin. — S. Paul teaches us that the Wages of Sin, is Death; & that all Men are, therefore, liable to Death, because all have sinned. If, then, Death held all Mankind in Bondage, our Redemption would not have been complete, unless Death had been overcome; That is, Unless we had been delivered from its Power. The Body wants to be freed from Corruption, as well as the Soul from Sin.

Now, there does not appear to be any other Way to overcome Death, but by submiting to it, and rising again from it. This Christ did in our Nature: And the Scriptures acquaint us, That he thereby made it possible for us to rise also. By raising his own human Nature from the Dead, he obtained Power to raise all the Descendants of Adam.

By teaching us to consider the Matter in this Light, Christianity disarms Death of all its Terrors, & of a Curse, makes it a Blessing to the Good, & the Virtuous. The Good, & the virtuous have, therefore, no longer any Reason to Dread it; but ought rather to rejoice in the Prospect of it; as of the happy Period of all the Vexations, & Sorrow, & Pain, & Sickness, & Sin, & Infirmity, which necessarily attend their Present State. — They ought not, therefore; They will not repine at the Thoughts of their Dissolution, but only be thereby excited to use the greatest Diligence in preparing for it. And when it approaches, they ought to submit to it, in full Confidence; That they shall by it be delivered from their whole fallen nature, with all its Evils & Miseries; from all Pollution of the Soul by Sin, & from these distempers tempered, corruptible Bodies with which they are now encumbered: And that, through the Mercy of God & the Power of their Redeemer, they shall rise again in that holy, heavenly Nature in which Adam was created; & shall forever enjoy all the Glories & Blessings of it.

N.B. This is the work & hand writing of Bishop Samuel Seabury. & came into my possession in this Mutilated State — H. Wilkins